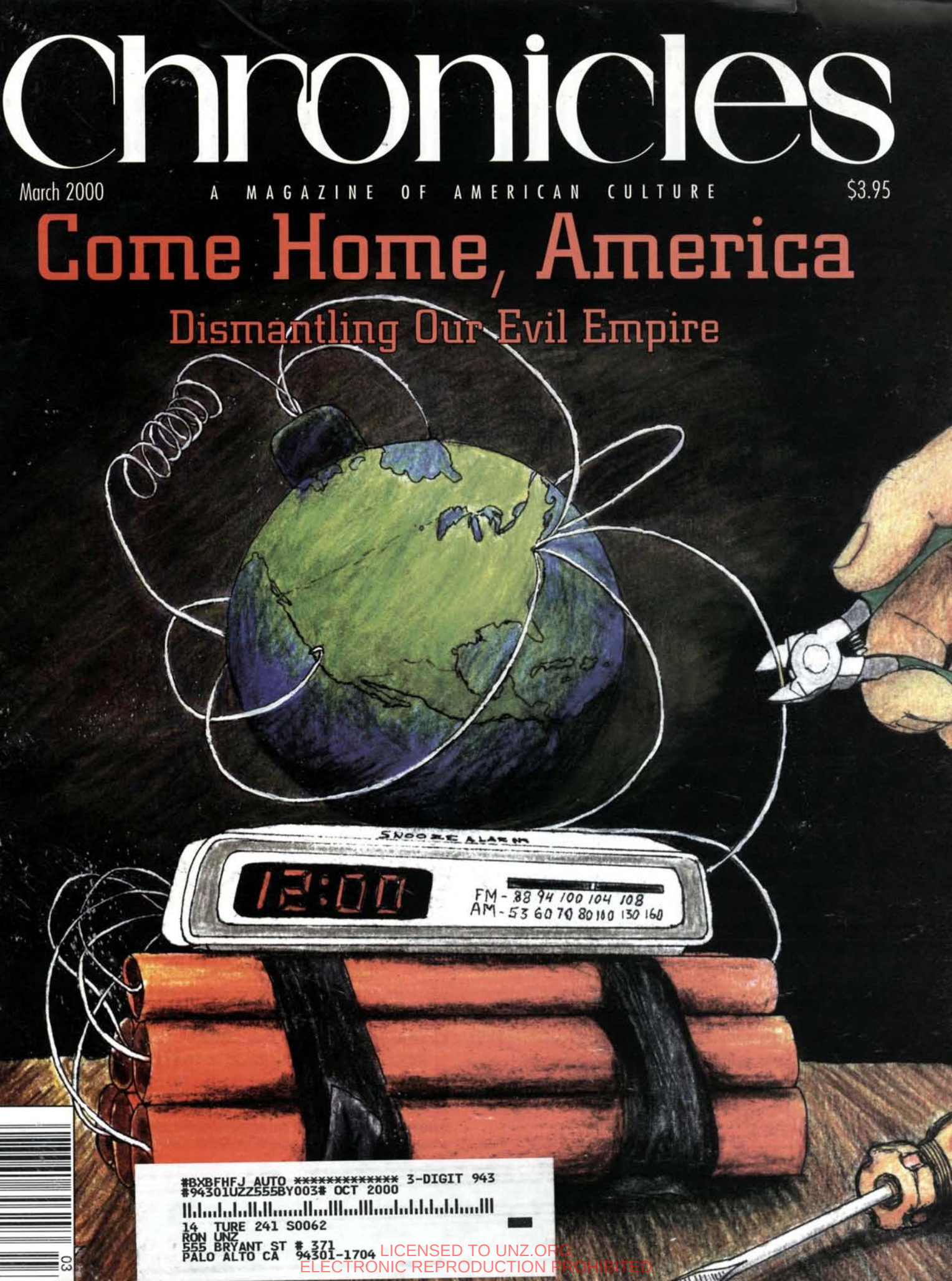
Chronicles

March 2000 A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE $3.95

Come Home, America

Dismantling Our Evil Empire



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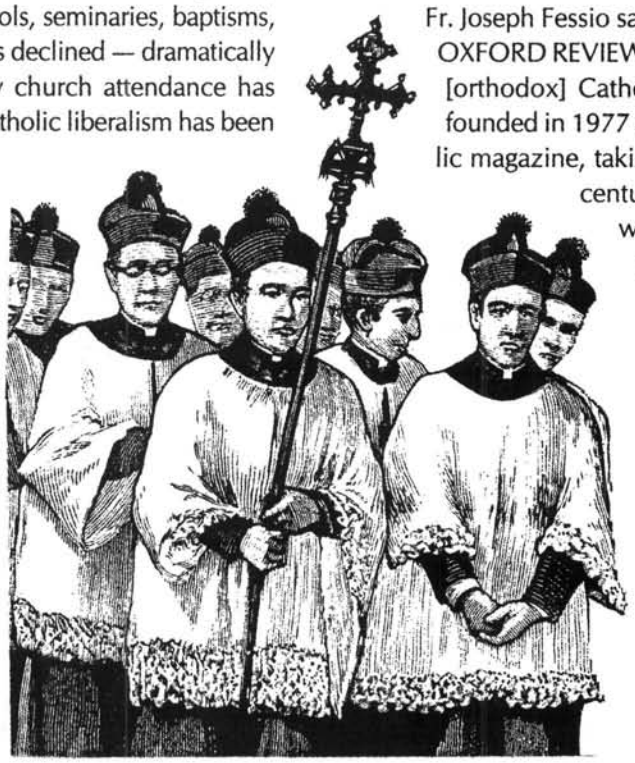
Traditional Catholicism Is Back

Since the 1960s, Catholicism in America has experimented with religious liberalism, and the results are in: Two out of three Catholics don't believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The number of priests, brothers, sisters, Catholic schools, seminaries, baptisms, marriages, and conversions has declined — dramatically in certain cases. And weekly church attendance has dropped from 70% to 25%. Catholic liberalism has been a monumental flop. Of course Father Flapdoodle, Sister Snakebite, and Bishop Bubbles haven't figured that out — they think the 60s never ended. Still trying to be cool cats, they're so *cool* they're frozen in a time warp.



But, mercifully, God's frozen people are thawing out. Where's the fire and dynamism in the Church today? Among traditional Catholics! The dioceses that have no vocations shortage, the religious orders that are growing, and the seminaries that are packed are predominantly the traditional ones. And traditional Catholics have been founding *new* colleges and seminaries. Polls show that the Catholics most committed to the Church are traditional Catholics. Seminarians and younger priests are much more traditional than middle-aged and older priests. The only novel idea in Catholic education is home-schooling, spearheaded by traditional Catholics. The only massive grassroots movement in the Church is the prolife movement, led by traditional Catholics. The only significant Catholic presence on TV is the ardently traditional EWTN. The only significant Catholic voice on radio is that of traditional Catholics.

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Quebec Separatism

The "Letter From Montreal: *Oui* Shall Overcome!" (*Correspondence*, December) by John O'Neill, who "writes from Detroit," is so riddled with errors that it makes this reader question the credibility of all your *Correspondence*.

1. "Jean Baptiste, the patron saint of Quebec." John the Baptist is the patron saint of French Canadians. Quebec has its quota of American-style symbols (e.g., an official flower, a flag, and even an official insect), but neither the provincial government nor the Roman Catholic Church has ever named a patron saint for the province.

2. "[T]he holiday is often referred to as *La Fête Nationale*." The Quebec government uses that designation, but the term (which even sounds stupid—imagine Americans attending a "National Holiday Picnic" on the Fourth of July) is virtually never used by ordinary people. Last June 24, my wife and I were caught up in the celebrating crowds in a town that votes heavily for the Parti Québécois and on the "Yes" side in separatist referendums, but we saw and heard only "*la Saint-Jean*" as the name of the holiday.

3. "[V]iolence and mass arrests were the norm [on Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day] until this year. The rioting in Quebec City was especially bad in 1996." This had nothing to do with politics. The "riots" have stopped because the police now apply a curfew and control the availability of beer.

4. "But more typical [of the federalist media] was the column by Josée Legault . . . " Miss Legault is a separatist, and on the extreme wing of the Parti Québécois at that. A recent column of hers stated: "for the past four years, a handful of sovereignists—including this columnist—have steadfastly called upon [Premier] Bouchard to get back to promoting sovereignty."

American conservatives, from the Heritage neos to your paleo selves, don't understand that Quebec separatism is just another case of affirmative action. It ensures the flow of benefits—"to make them feel happy staying in Canada." The sad truth is that the proportion of French Canadians living directly or indirectly on federal handouts is comparable to that of America's black minority. While French Canadians, despite their ultramontane Catholic background, share some cultural traits with American Southern whites, their politicians are more like Al Sharpton, Maxine Waters, and Jesse Jackson.

—Lionel Albert
Knowlton, Quebec

Mr. O'Neill Replies:

Mr. Albert might consider his own errors, which call into question his credibility.

Anyone familiar with Quebec knows the common and frequent reference to the Jean Baptiste holiday is *La Fête Nationale*. This term did not originate with the current separatist government, but has long been used in modern-day Quebec.

Of course, if Mr. Albert really believes that "picnic" is a good translation of "fête," he might just be unfamiliar with his province's history and holidays. The literal translation of "fête" is "festival," and a more nuanced translation would indicate that it is a festival of religious and/or nationalist significance.

Mr. Albert's contention that the term "is virtually never used by ordinary people" is a source of great irony. In an article in the November 1998 issue of *Catholic World Report*, in which I challenged the notion that Quebec nationalism no longer has religious significance, I was careful to point out that some secularization has occurred and that the holiday is now often called *La Fête Nationale*. An irate English-speaker from Montreal wrote a letter to the editor insisting the saint has nothing to do with the holiday and that it is now *always* referred to as *La Fête Nationale*. In reply to a letter of mine which was published in the November 1999 issue of *First Things*, Canadian scholar and journalist Preston Jones made a similar point.

Regarding my reference to John the Baptist as the patron saint of Quebec, Mr. Albert engages in hair-splitting. The feast day of St. John the Baptist is a legal holiday in Quebec, and it evokes far more nationalist pride throughout the province (even among French-speakers who wish to remain part of Canada) than does Canada Day (formerly known as Dominion Day) a week later.

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No doubt, alcohol consumption and the lack of a curfew played an important role in the riots in Quebec City on Jean Baptiste Day in 1996. But this hardly precludes their political content. Rioting has not been a problem in either Quebec City or Montreal on the average Friday night or on other holidays, only on the holiday which is a source of both great pride and political tension throughout the province.

My humble apology to Miss Legault for assuming she is a federalist. But the article which I cited appeared in the *Montreal Gazette*, the primary federalist voice in Quebec, and it is typical of the federalist media's state of denial.

Mr. Albert makes a similar mistake in assuming that I am a paleoconservative simply because my article appeared in *Chronicles*. The main sentiment I share with *Chronicles* is its bold challenge of those forms of bigotry which are acceptable in elite intellectual circles.

Mr. Albert claims that "the proportion of French Canadians living directly or indirectly on federal handouts is comparable to that of America's black minority"; in fact, the percentage of French Canadians who rely on government assistance is *greater* than that of black Americans. But Mr. Albert's condemnation of French Canadians for accepting welfare indicates that English-speaking Canada applies a higher standard to French Canada. All of Canada—French and English—is reliant on a huge government bureaucracy.

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

BORIS YELTSIN appeared on the Russian state-run television networks on December 31, 1999, with an unexpected—by ordinary Russians, at least—announcement: "It is time for new faces," said the man who is most responsible for creating the "new Russia." "I am resigning," croaked the dipsomaniac political boss, renowned for his mastery of elite political intrigues and hated by the "other Russia" of one-legged war veterans left without pensions, ancient crones begging in the streets, and patriots shamed by the humiliation of their country through the corruption of the president's entourage, the "family." Yeltsin offered a Clintonesque apology for any "mistakes" made during his eight-year reign; though his intentions were good, he was perhaps "naive" to think that there would not be a few rocky patches on the road to the new Russia. In the West, Yeltsin's departure was accompanied by cynical crowing about the "Father of Russian Democracy" and the "end of an era" (though the sighs of relief were audible as well). While Yeltsin's resignation was certainly the end of something, just what came to an end will probably not become clear until after the early presidential elections scheduled for March 26.

Chronicles readers were the first in the West to learn of Yeltsin's possible early retirement (see *Cultural Revolutions*, December 1999). The deal with a successor hinged on two things: first, an agreement to shield Yeltsin and his blood relations from post-term prosecution (acting President Vladimir Putin's first official act was to sign an executive order granting Yeltsin immunity from prosecution and providing a comfortable post-Kremlin income for his relatives); and second, a political situation that would make the successor virtually unbeatable in early presidential elections (*Chronicles* readers are also aware of the Kremlin's possible, even probable, involvement in provoking the splendid little war in the Caucasus, where the Russian army's success thus far has rallied the population around ex-KGB operative Putin; the relative victory of pro-Kremlin forces in the December 19 parliamentary elections probably determined Putin's future role). There may be, however, a third precondition, one that would allow Yeltsin to reign, though not necessarily rule, as the leader of a newly minted Russia-Belarus union. In effect, Yeltsin could become Russia's Deng Xiaoping, hovering around the Kremlin, just off the political radar screen. It would be a characteristic move for a man whose whole adult life has been devoted to the ruthless pursuit of power, whose only real pastime has been a never-ending series of intrigues.

What a state Yeltsin leaves Russia in: Crime and official corruption are rampant; a demographic black hole is sucking the nation toward oblivion, with some observers claiming that the country's population will be cut in half in just 50 years; the war in the Caucasus is raging and will likely haunt a debilitated Russia in the next century; the economy is in a shambles (though temporarily bolstered by higher oil prices); and the country's moral corruption, exemplified by Yeltsin and the family, has become the stuff of legend.

Few claim that Yeltsin created this freak show single-handedly, but fewer would claim that he attempted to do anything about it: In fact, his own behavior encouraged decadence and degradation. The Russian people remember the drunkard who embarrassed the nation by pinching women during official functions, passing out in Ireland, drunkenly conducting an orchestra in Germany, and displaying cruelty to his opponents and callousness to the fate of his own people. "Let them eat cake" could well have been the signature line of Yeltsin's *de facto* chief of staff, his daughter Tatyana Dyachenko, whose greed and stupidity are the source of many Yeltsin-era anecdotes. The end may not yet have come for Yeltsin and the "family," but his "place in history" has already been assured. God help Russia.

—*Denis Petrov*

GAY MARRIAGE is once again in the news. This time, the rumblings come not from the Sandwich Islands, but the Green Mountains of Vermont. In a ruling handed down right before Christmas, the state's governing body, the Vermont Supreme Court, instructed the legislature to extend the benefits and protections of marriage to homosexual couples.

The court's decision rested on its interpretation of the Common Benefits Clause of the Vermont Constitution. In essence, the clause declares that government is instituted for the benefit of the entire community, not for the advantage of the few. Homosexual couples argued that Vermont's refusal to issue them marriage licenses unconstitutionally deprived them of certain statutory rights and privileges such as spousal insurance benefits, medical decision-making privileges, and intestate succession.

The court had asked whether Vermont's prohibition of homosexual marriage bore a reasonable relation to the state's interests behind the policy. Vermont advanced a number of reasons for

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the exclusion, including furthering the link between procreation and child-rearing, promoting child-rearing in a setting with both male and female models, and furthering the state's general public policy against same-sex marriage. However, the court concluded that Vermont's grounds for the policy were unreasonable.

The court littered the opinion with citations to such publications as "Lesbians Choosing Motherhood," "Lesbian Mothers and Gay Fathers," and "Children of the Lesbian Baby Boom." Of course, Vermont cut its own throat through earlier legislation. For example, the court cited Vermont's law permitting homosexual couples to adopt children, and the state's hate-crimes law which specifically protects homosexuals. The court reasoned that "[i]n light of these express policy choices," Vermont's hostility towards same-sex marriage was "patently without substance."

Considering the court's radical interpretation of "common benefits," one wonders how long other facets of the state's marriage laws will stand. Surely age and consanguinity restrictions violate the Common Benefits Clause as well. And this Jacobin equality need not be limited to marriage laws. The possibilities are endless.

Surprisingly, the court declined to craft a remedy for the constitutional violation. Instead, it instructed the legislature "to consider and enact legislation consistent with the constitutional mandate" of the ruling. The court did suggest two options for its legislative lackeys: a domestic partnership law giving homosexual couples the same benefits as heterosexual couples; or a new marriage law which includes homosexuals.

If Vermont takes the latter course, there is a risk that homosexuals will travel there to marry, intending to return to their home states to demand recognition of the marriages. The United States Constitution commands that "Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial Proceedings of every other State." In determining the validity of a marriage, most states follow the rule of *lex loci celebrationis*—the place of the ceremony. But it is generally recognized that, if another state has a significant relationship to the spouses at the time of the marriage and upholding the marriage would violate that state's public policy, then *lex loci celebrationis* need not be honored. South Carolina, for example, probably could deny recognition to a same-sex marriage if a South Carolina couple exchanged vows in Vermont and then returned to the Palmetto state. A more difficult question would arise if native Vermonters married in Vermont and then moved to South Carolina. If South Carolina had no significant contacts with the couple before the marriage, current case law would prohibit the state from refusing recognition under the public-policy exception. Congress sought to correct this problem by passing the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which permits all states to deny full faith and credit to same-sex marriages, but there are some questions about DOMA's constitutionality.

Vermont could follow Hawaii's lead and amend its constitution to prohibit same-sex marriage. Rumor is, however, that the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the Vermont House favor a marriage law which includes homosexuals. Unfortunately, only time and extensive litigation will sort out the mess that Vermont's Supreme Court has crafted for the Union.

—*William J. Watkins, Jr.*

DONALD J. TRUMP's campaign for the Reform Party presidential nomination may never get off the ground, and anyone who has ever visited Trump's stomping grounds in Atlantic City should not be surprised. The Trump Taj Mahal casino sits alongside the Atlantic City boardwalk, a gaudy reminder of the excesses of its owner. The "Taj," which ranked first among all Atlantic City casinos in total gaming revenues in 1998, is a key component of the empire controlled by "The Donald," the nickname bestowed upon the entrepreneur by his first ex-wife, Ivana.

On the boardwalk near the Taj, shops feature "Special $1 Readings by a Psychic," "Tarot Cardreading for $10," "99 Cent Everything," and "Cash For Gold." (Another pawnshop off the boardwalk advertises interest in purchasing engagement rings.) The now-empty Trump's World Fair Hotel Casino stands nearby. But hope springs eternal. "On this site," a billboard gushes, "will be built one of the largest and most spectacular Casino/Hotels anywhere in the world. Donald J. Trump." On such a foundation are Trump's political aspirations built.

Inside the Taj, with its 42-story hotel tower and adjacent casino, the Oasis Slot Lounge offers nickel and quarter slots; the Sultan's Diamonds area provides one and five dollar slots; and Sultan's Emeralds offers middle-class high rollers a crack at $25 and $100 slots. On a recent Saturday afternoon, I observed a multicultural mélange in the Oasis; a large group of senior citizens, with a smattering of Gen X-ers, among the Diamonds; and a sea of empty chairs next to the Emeralds. There is also Sultan's Palace (a lounge with the casino's best view), Sultan's Feast (a restaurant), and engraved *objets d'art* from India. The idea is to suggest to visitors that they too can be kings and queens. Caesar's Palace makes this point more bluntly. "Enter A Citizen," an entrance sign proclaims, "Leave An Emperor." Give Trump credit: Even he is not that brazen.

The Taj has thick magenta carpeting and polished brass escalators that leave visitors with the impression that they are surrounded by gold. The only objects more ubiquitous in Atlantic City are the ATM machines that line the casino entrances. The get-rich-quick mentality of today's debt-ridden, leveraged global economy is on display, right next to that economy's flotsam and jetsam, who beg passersby for handouts on the boardwalk.

Trump borrowed heavily to become the dominant casino owner in Atlantic City; his firm has about 25 percent of the city's casino "square footage, slot machines, table games and hotel room inventory," according to the 1999 annual report of Trump Hotel/Casino Resort (which trades on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol DJT, Trump's initials). The Trump name itself is described as "an asset" of the firm in public filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. But DJT's long-term debt-to-equity ratio is more than seven to one; more than 75 percent of the cash generated from operations in a recent year was spent on *interest payments* to finance its outstanding debt. DJT's stock has lost nearly three quarters of its value since the end of 1996. One plausible explanation is that DJT used debt to purchase the Trump Marina property from The Donald at an inflated price.

The Reform Party prides itself on its support for balanced federal budgets and fiscal restraint, and Ross Perot made those issues the cornerstone of his 1992 and 1996 presidential campaigns. Future historians will likely credit the party for shaping public opinion to the point where the Democrats and Republicans

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were compelled to finish a budget recently with a surplus. (The last federal budget surplus was under Richard M. Nixon.) How can Trump presume to balance the nation's budget when the publicly traded company that bears his name is highly leveraged?

If Trump applied similar leverage practices to the federal government, the national debt would explode in size. The dollar would likely fall on foreign exchange markets against major currencies such as the Japanese yen, and interest rates would rise as the bond market reacted. Mortgages would become more expensive, and the cost of major purchases, such as automobiles, would increase. The economic law of "unintended consequences" would prevail. (Markets trump politicians, no pun intended.)

—*Greg Kaza*

SCHOOL VOUCHERS violate the First Amendment of the Constitution—or so ruled federal District Judge Solomon Oliver, Jr., in early December. Cleveland's voucher plan, authorized under state legislation, was nondenominational and permitted students, selected by lot, to choose a school participating in the program and to receive a grant from the state to subsidize the cost of attending that school. Public schools adjacent to the Cleveland school district and private schools within Cleveland were eligible to participate. No public schools registered for the program; of the private schools that did, over 82 percent were church-affiliated.

The purpose of the voucher plan was not to subsidize sectarian education, but to relieve some of the pressure on the city's public schools and to offer greater educational opportunities to Cleveland's poorest citizens. For the 1999-2000 school year, 3,761 students enrolled in the program; 60 percent were from families at or below the poverty level, and most were black. Judge Oliver recognized that there was a valid secular purpose to the program, and was even prepared to concede that it might be true that "students participating in the Voucher Program receive a superior education to children in the Cleveland Public Schools." Nevertheless, he said he was constrained by U.S. Supreme Court decisions to rule that, because the majority of the schools participating in the scheme were religious ones, the voucher program "has the direct and immediate effect of advancing religion"; therefore, the plan is unconstitutional.

Judge Oliver's decision is not without support in Supreme Court jurisprudence. The Court ruled in a 1973 tuition reimbursement case that the First Amendment had been violated because the vast majority of private schools eligible were sectarian. It is far from clear, however, whether the Supreme Court's subsequent "Establishment Clause" jurisprudence has undermined the 1973 ruling. Indeed, it requires the wisdom of Judge Oliver's Old Testament namesake to be able to reconcile the Supreme Court's jurisprudence in this area. It is impermissible, the Court has ruled, to provide direct grants to religious schools, but states can reimburse parents for the costs of bus transportation to religious schools; it is perfectly proper to have the state supply religious schools with the same textbooks on secular subjects that are supplied to public schools, and it is constitutionally permitted for the state to send publicly paid teachers into sectarian schools to teach remedial education.

These fine distinctions are summed up in what one wag has called "the aptly named Lemon test," established by the Supreme Court in *Lemon* v. *Kurtzman* (1971). Under the "Lemon test," government actions are impermissible when they: have no secular purpose; have a "primary effect" of advancing religion; or foster an "excessive entanglement" between government and religion. Lately, items two and three have been conflated, resulting in the test applied in the Cleveland vouchers case: Does the program at issue "result in governmental indoctrination; define its recipients by reference to religion or create an excessive entanglement"?

Judge Oliver's conclusion was hardly compelled by legal precedent, however, and it doesn't take much thought to realize that any time subsidies are offered to religious schools (as they are when transportation, remedial instruction, or textbooks are directly or indirectly paid for by public funds), the sectarian purpose of those schools is aided. More troubling, especially for readers of this periodical, is the assumption of federal jurists for almost 40 years that the First Amendment should be construed to forbid *state* experimentation in sectarian education. The text of the First Amendment, after all, prohibits only Congress from establishing religion, and there is no evidence that the framers of the 14th Amendment intended to change that, even though the federal courts now routinely assume that the 14th Amendment requires that the First Amendment be applied against all activities of state and local governments.

Judge Oliver, to his credit, understood that his decision would be appealed, and that higher courts would salvage or kill Cleveland's school vouchers. Accordingly, he suspended his order until the appellate process is exhausted. The Cleveland experiment will thus continue for a while, and sooner or later the U.S. Supreme Court will be forced to reconcile its contradictory rulings and to determine whether states and localities are permitted to establish voucher programs.

Vouchers are fiercely opposed by a coalition of public-school teachers' unions and so-called civil libertarians, such as the ACLU. The former group is fearful of losing a monopoly over public education, and the latter is fearful of the influence of religion in the public square. Vouchers are supported by an equally interesting coalition of inner-city parents concerned about the lack of quality in public-school education and conservative groups concerned about the erosion of moral education in the public schools. A sensible republic, founded upon principles of decentralization, would let local democracy resolve this conflict. Certainly this is what the Framers intended. Maybe the Supreme Court can figure that out.

—*Stephen B. Presser*

ROBERT E. LEE's picture has been restored to a mural display along Richmond's Canal Walk. As I reported last month ("Letter From Virginia: The Battle of Richmond," *Correspondence*), City Councilman Sa'ad El-Amin had declared that General Lee's picture is "offensive to blacks" and had threatened to call a boycott of the Canal Walk unless the picture were removed. Panicked, James E. Rogers, president of the Richmond Historic Riverfront Foundation, immediately obeyed.

The backlash was furious. Members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans picketed the Canal Walk, and citizens flooded newspapers with angry phone calls. Reeling, the foundation formed a multicultural citizens' committee to study the proposed murals. The committee recommended that Lee be portrayed in civilian dress, instead of in his military uniform. They added eight new images,

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including those of Father Abraham in Richmond in 1865 and Powhatan Beaty, a black Medal of Honor recipient. The proposed murals were displayed in a civic center, and the public was invited to comment. After more than 800 people offered their opinions, the murals were finally approved. The recommendation was generally well received: A Richmond *Times Dispatch* poll found that a vast majority of all races—81 percent—supported displaying the picture of Lee.

If racial harmony was his objective, El-Amin could have surrendered to public opinion and dropped his opposition. Instead, he proposed that the City Council order the removal of all the pictures, claiming that "white supremacy underlies the whole issue." He called any white person who disagreed with him a "racist" and any black, an "Uncle Tom."

Ignoring El-Amin's race-baiting rhetoric, the council defeated his proposal eight to one. Infuriated, the Coalition for Racial Justice announced that its members would "shun" two black councilmen, including W. R. "Bill" Johnson, Jr., because they "voted with the white folks." They picked on the wrong man. Johnson, a former Marine, asked, "Who are they to tell us who we can or can't talk to—like we're a bunch of sheep?" He added that "Folk need to have a little gumption. It's the same thing with dealing with a bully. You take so much, then take it to him. Once you do, you'll find a paper tiger."

As Orwell cautioned, history is written by those with power, and it is power—not "reconciliation," "tolerance," "diversity," "harmony," or "equality"—that the El-Amins of the world desire. Who might be the next target, as their appetite for cultural destruction is whetted? Unless Americans of all races stand united against these demagogues, we may find that we have no history left.

—Lynn Hopewell

Y2K has come and gone, and the modern world (for good or ill) is still standing. In the United States, business and government spent heavily on Y2K fixes; in foreign countries, much less. Yet the results were similar: Y2K was a false alarm. Why were so many computer-savvy people mistaken?

The reason computers did not come crashing to a halt when faced with the decision whether to classify "00" as "1900" or "2000" is simple enough: They cannot tell time. They respond to counting programs through electronic or mechanical means only; unlike men, they are not conscious. By labeling complicated storage systems as "memory," the "experts" had set the stage for the fiasco. The Russians—who, at least, understand the significance of philosophy—were not overly concerned about Y2K. It was the "pragmatic" Americans who fell for it.

What lay behind the Y2K hysteria was a fundamental misunderstanding of how we become aware of time. Electrical impulses running through a silicon chip cannot enable an unconscious machine to develop a sense of the past, any more than a tree's annual rings cause it to recall an earlier winter. We become aware of time through the human faculty of memory. In the absence of memory, an awareness of time could not be acquired simply by observing changes in perceptual patterns. Memory is more than mere retention. It shows us that the past once existed and that a present exists, and it indicates that a future will come. Lacking this faculty, computers cannot truly recognize that something occurred in the past (say, 1900) in contrast to the present (2000).

Time is not a subjective reality. To borrow an example from my book, *The Stance of Atlas*: When we say that a boy is now 18 years of age, we could mean that, since he was born, the earth has traveled around the sun 18 times. But "since" is a temporal term, and so is "was." This statement of the boy's age cannot be made without reference to the past, present, or future. Clearly, those 18 revolutions were independent of the boy's existence at age 18. They might have occurred even if all humanity had died—or even if there had never been any life on earth.

Since men become aware of time through the faculty of memory and not through a mechanical comparison of perceptions, and since time is neither mental nor physical, but simply a *fact*, how could an unconscious computer chip develop such an understanding?

And so the Y2K fiasco originated in an unwillingness to recognize the essentially human character of memory, which allowed computer programmers to ascribe this faculty to mechanical systems of retention—and to ignore the fact that the very existence of human memory points beyond Man to his Creator.

—Peter Erickson

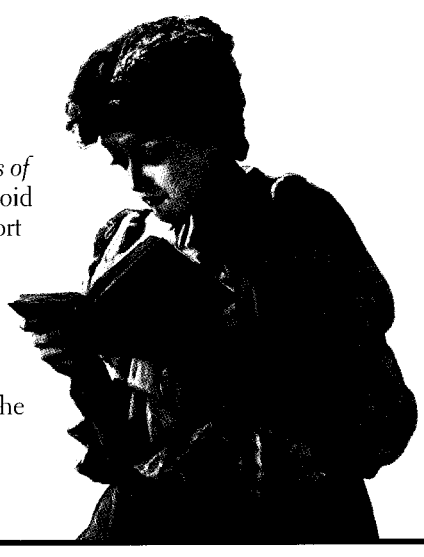
OBITER DICTA: Matija Beckovic, a Montenegrin, wrote and published "Amerika" in Belgrade during the NATO bombing. The poem was translated for *Chronicles* by our editor, Thomas Fleming. Mr. Beckovic, who serves on the Crown Council, is considered the greatest living Serb poet.

Our second poet this month is **James Everett Kibler**. A professor of English at the University of Georgia, Dr. Kibler is the author of *Our Fathers' Fields* and the forthcoming *Poems From Scorched Earth*.

Chronicles is illustrated by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University, and attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.

BOOK OF NEXT MONTH

Our book for next month is *Dark Rivers of the Heart* by Dean Koontz. This paranoid thriller is the popular novelist's best effort to date. The son of a psychotic lady-killer discovers that his dad is just an amateur villain compared with government agents who only want to help. Please note that, like many of Koontz's novels, *Dark Rivers* is not for the faint of heart.



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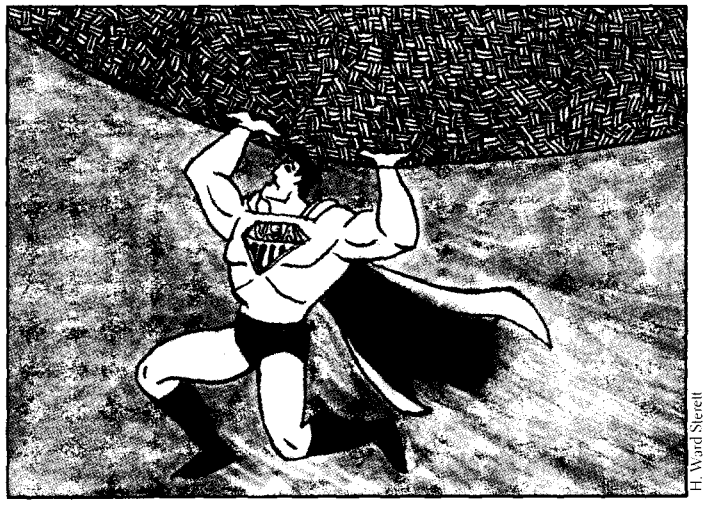

NATO's Dark Age

by Thomas Fleming

You have seen them on the evening news, the long weary lines of Christian refugees: Serbs streaming from the Krajina, Bosnia, Kosovo; Russians from Chechnya, Dagestan, and Kazakhstan. These are not the victims of some short and bitter war that strews exiles across the map of Europe for several years until they can make their way back home. Many are the symptoms of wholesale transmigrations and displacements, visible auguries of the bumpy slide from one era to another.

The Dark Ages have returned, in fact; though not the brilliant period of medieval civilization, but the earlier centuries of mass dislocations and depopulations, when the old Roman roads from Constantinople to Sardika (Sofija) to Naissus (Nis) were so deserted that the bandits patrolling them might have starved for lack of business.

As Roman power collapsed in Europe, tribes of barbarians swept through the once-civilized provinces, enslaving the citizens they could catch and driving the rest into exile. Over here, we know best the stories of the Franks, Lombards, and Anglo-Saxons who terrorized the western side of the Roman world, but farther east the Greeks and the Romanized Dacians and Illyrians suffered the onslaught of the Mongol and Turkish peoples who drove the Slavic tribes before them like so many deer running from a forest fire. The Bulgars and Avars, Patzinaks and Cumans were a more terrible and enduring scourge of the East Roman (and later the Slavic) populations than Attila had been to Gaul and Italy.

In the Balkans, the land-hungry and disorderly Slavs settled down to farming, and the Bulgars, who adopted Slavic language and customs and the religion of Constantinople, succeeded in forming a state that rivaled East Rome. But the Byzantine, Bulgar, and Serb states were all prey to the hordes of savage invaders from the steppes until the most savage of them all, the Seljuk and Ottoman Turks, finally destroyed the Christian civilization of the East and subjugated the Balkans.

Like the Celts in the West, Slavs were difficult to organize. The East Roman Emperor Maurice described them as incapable of accepting a unifying authority. Apart from religious differences—Moravians and Croats were "Latin," while Serbs, Bulgars, and Russians were "Greek"—the unity of the Slavs was made impossible by the Magyar wedge driven into their heart, and although the Hungarians, drawing upon all the cultural influences of the region, became one of the great European peoples, they effectively blocked the emergence of a larger Slavic kingdom that might have resisted the savage invaders who, in adopting Islam, added a religious dimension to their pillaging.

Enduring misery and servitude that was scarcely less disgusting than the dominion of the Turks to which their Balkan cousins were subjected, Russians and Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Poles were attacked periodically by slave-raiding Tartars who clogged the old roads with mile after brutal mile of Christian slaves. All these Eastern peoples and states—Byzantine, Serb, Hungarian, Polish, Russian—received the brunt of the Turk and Tartar invasions, protecting the ungrateful West. We no longer even remember their names—Emperor Leo III, King John Sobieski, the royal humanist Mathias Corvinus, Prince Lazar Hrebljanovic—or when we do, in the case of the Transylvanian Vlad or Russian Ivan, we transform them into nightmare demons, Dracula and Ivan the Terrible.

The Russian saga is a story so filled with miraculous reversals of fortune that it might have been scripted by Euripides in a perversely optimistic mood. In one generation, they are being oppressed and brutalized by Tartars, and in the next they are

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reemerging as a world power. By the time simpleminded American power brokers are finished counting the Russians out, it will be time for them to go back to warning the world against the menace of the next Russian empire.

Tocqueville's comparison of Russia with the United States has passed through so many hands that the details have been rubbed off along with the shine. There is one important difference, however. While the Russians were content, for the most part, with subduing the Tartars and limiting their capacity for violence, we short-tempered Anglo-Saxons thoroughly and permanently eliminated the national existence of most of our own "native American" Mongols. The Russians cracked down hard in the Caucasus, but no harder than we did in the once-Mexican Southwest, and whatever else can be said of American Manifest Destiny, it left comparatively few Indians or Mexicans behind to take revenge. Chechens are still causing trouble today, and not simply because they can mobilize the most violent criminal mob operating in and out of the former Soviet Union.

Americans can afford to lecture the Russians on the treatment of their conquered minorities because we have, for the most part, eliminated ours. The Russians, however, are less interested in our conquest of the North American continent—events of long ago and far away, so far as they are concerned—than they are with our recent conquest of Kosovo. The Russians are very clear on American aims in Eastern Europe. Paranoid or not, they can trace the probable trajectory of the scimitar that NATO has aimed at the Russian heart: from Kosovo to Sanjak to Bosnia to Chechnya. The NATO border now reaches to Poland and Hungary, and it is no accident that NATO jets are now skimming along Russia's western frontier. According to an Itar-Tass report, the Baltic Fleet's anti-aircraft defense service in Kaliningrad has "detected 1100 foreign aircraft flying in the vicinity of this northwestern part of the Russian state border."

NATO leaders are reluctant to give overt support to the Chechen rebels, though Bill Clinton has said that the Chechen people should not have to suffer simply because their leaders have staged a rebellion. President Clinton has apparently quit gloating over the photographs of dead and maimed civilians in Serbia long enough to distinguish people from their governments. Representatives of this humanitarian administration say they want to help the Chechen people without supporting their bid for independence.

To determine how far the President is willing to go, some crusading member of the Washington press corps ought to ask Mr. Clinton about the 15 tons of NATO uniforms seized by Russian customs. Labeled "men's suits," the uniforms were supposedly going to the U.S. military attaché in Georgia—an operation with 15 employees. At 3,000 uniforms, that would mean 200 uniforms per person. Either Georgia's winters are colder than we have been led to believe, or the uniforms were meant for the Chechen rebels who have been photographed (according to a story on *www.Russian-life.com*) wearing identical outfits.

The Russians have only one recourse, and that is to construct an anti-NATO alliance with China and perhaps even India. Boris Yeltsin, in a drunken fit of candor this past December, warned Bill Clinton that Russia was still a nuclear power, suggesting tactlessly that he and his Chinese friends were able to handle their part of the planet without the help of the world's only remaining superpower. Mr. Clinton had been sounding off on one of the topics—the list is endless—about which he knows next to nothing, namely the Russian army's campaign to suppress the rebellion in Chechnya.

According to Clinton, and to other leaders of the humane and democratic NATO alliance, the Russians are guilty of using excessive force against the Chechens. Most conservatives, as usual, agree with Clinton, and Sen. John McCain is only repeating the conventional wisdom of the past 20 years when he calls for a pro-Islamic strategy to undermine the Russian federation and prevent it from recovering its status as a world power.

The American strategy, however, is as naive as it is immoral. Forever fighting the last war, the American leaders are determined to use Islamic insurgencies against Russia the way we used Muslims in Bosnia and Albanians in Kosovo. The precedent is Afghanistan, and the terrifying consequences of our Afghan policy—which installed a green version of the Khmer Rouge in a strategically important region—are lost upon the State Department planners and intelligence experts. "What else were we supposed to do?" is their plaintive response to civilians who have the bad taste to introduce the subject.

Many Europeans know the score by now. Pretending to be shocked by the evidence that there was no genocide in Kosovo and no mass graves, journalists and politicians have denounced Clinton and Blair for their duplicity and recklessness. E.U. leaders have finally followed through on their threat to establish a separate defense force, independent of NATO, and they did not cave in to American pressure to grant NATO a sort of *primae noctis* right of first refusal on the use of force in Europe.

Here is the box score on the Clinton-*Weekly Standard* foreign policy pursued by the United States throughout the 90's:

- Israelis—angry at American pressure to trade land for peace.
- Arabs—angry over America's support for Israel and the continued air attacks and embargo that have killed over a million Iraqi civilians since the end of the Gulf War.
- United Europe—determined to shake off the American military yoke and protect the last shreds of European economic independence.
- India—leaders openly saying they need nuclear weapons to protect their people from American attack.
- China—justifiably furious with what it knows (if only from the British press) to be the deliberate bombing of its embassy in Belgrade.
- Russia—grimly determined to upgrade its armed forces and to rebuild an empire that includes Belarus and probably Ukraine.

The recent anti-Clinton riots in Greece, Turkey, and Bulgaria may be just the beginning, because the "Clinton Doctrine," as our foreign affairs editor has dubbed it, has inflicted far more damage to American prestige than to the Yugoslav military.

Less than ten years after winning the Cold War, the United States is dreaded in Europe as a kind of overgrown village idiot who takes delight in smashing up the porcelain at the vicar's tea party: Our leaders in both parties are incapable of finding European capitals on a map; they speak no foreign languages, and their knowledge of history is even less substantial than the erudition displayed by CNN talking-heads (say, Al Hunt or Eleanor Clift) when their staff has failed to check out the Groliers online encyclopedia.

However, the greatest blow has been to America's moral rep-

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utation. Bubbling over with the platitudes of democracy and human rights, our political leaders rain death on the innocent peoples of Iraq and Serbia; repeating by rote the slogans of international free trade, they impose criminal embargoes upon Libya, Iraq, Cuba, and Yugoslavia, when everybody knows that the only effect of such embargoes is to deprive simple people of the necessities of life. And if anyone does speak out in lawful protest, he is immediately labeled an anti-American leftist. When Pat Buchanan finally came out against economic sanctions as acts of war, he was denounced as a friend of dictators by longtime Republican operative (and current Donald Trump advisor) Roger Stone. My people, my people, as Zora Neale Hurston used to say.

Even the American clergy have lost their humanity. When I was quoted recently in the *Nation* to the effect that the United States was becoming an evil empire, a liberal cleric who has displayed no serious interest in foreign policy denounced the statement as "repugnant." In fact, there is a swelling chorus of bloodthirsty cheers for NATO chanted by the very leftists who took part in illegal demonstrations against the Vietnam War. They were delighted when Martin Luther King, Jr., told African-American soldiers not to fight the white man's war against a colored nation in Asia, but they call for the rack and the iron maiden when conservatives appeal to the conscience of their fellow citizens.

There is no paradox: These people supported international socialism in the 1960's, when it was espoused by the Soviet Union, but now that the U.S.S.R. has disintegrated and Clinton's emerging U.S.S.A. has taken up the Brezhnev mantel, left-wing globalists (many of whom prefer to be called conservatives) have discovered that aerial bombardment of civilians is a virtuous display of patriotism.

Meanwhile, the refugees from NATO continue on their weary way. Belgrade is overflowing with the victims of the American attack on Kosovo and the American-Croat expulsion of the Krajina Serbs. Western relief experts estimate that as much as ten percent of the Serbian population is literally starving to death. Refugees from U.S./NATO policies are bringing killer strains of TB and even the Black Death into the American heartland.

The Dark Ages are back, and the Eastern parts of Christendom are being overrun by barbarian invasions. This time, however, the invaders are sent and paid for by a country that used to be both Christian and republican. If we have any power as citizens over American foreign policy, it is not through marches and demonstrations but through our votes: every two years for a congressman, every four years for the president, every six for a senator. It is time to retire the Democrats and to send every Republican collaborator back home where he can find out what his votes in Congress are doing to his constituents.

What is a practical litmus test for Christians? Most might say abortion, but whatever they do, presidents and congressmen will never be able to prevent an evil woman from killing her baby; they can, however, refuse to murder European Christians. If George Bush will promise to bring home the boys and girls and to give up this foolish and evil dream of world empire, go ahead and vote for him, even if you think he may be lying. If, on the other hand, he will promise only to be Clinton-and-a-half—a Rehoboam to Clinton's Solomon—then Christians who can think for themselves are free to answer: "Every man to your tents, O Israel," and to find new leaders and new parties that will call a halt from this insane march to our destruction. c

DICTATIONS

Time's Ugliest Children

Between the two world wars, Robinson Jeffers watched as the old American Republic settled into empire. Jeffers was an honest man, a patriotic Democrat who knew that the extension of American hegemony into Europe and Asia could only mean an "empire." Since candor has never been an American virtue, American imperialists prefer kinder, gentler expressions, like "saving the world for democracy" or "protecting human rights." The prize for the most impudent euphemism goes to the *Weekly Standard* for proposing to substitute the original Latin *imperium* for a downright English derivative that means what it says.

I would like to assume that the *Standard*'s KKK of foreign policy—Kristol-Kagan-Kaplan—know enough Latin to be deliberately dishonest, but in the unlikely event they are sincere, they might pause to consider the history of *imperium*/"empire." The Latin term means something like sovereign authority, and *imperium* was the sovereign power of the Roman commonwealth as exercised by the magistrates. A republican proconsular general could wield that same power outside Roman territory, and although from an outsider's perspective—that of a Gaul or a Jew—*imperium* would obviously represent an alien force trying to occupy his country, the word did not specify even the form of government, much less a particular foreign policy. (*Imperium* was, however, used even by Romans as a metaphor for the area they ruled.)

This benign use of empire survived into English. "All empire is no more than power in trust," was the sage Dryden's observation. A hundred years later, however, when Burke uses "empire," he is more likely to mean the British colonial dominions. Then which of these two basic meanings does the *Standard* have in mind, when it commends *imperium* as the goal of American foreign policy? Not, surely, the primary Latin sense of sovereign authority, because no one challenges the fact that the American government exercises sovereign authority within its territory. The only alternative explanation is that they want to misuse *imperium* to mean empire in its later, colonial sense, but that they lack the courage of the British imperialists whom they so much admire.

In this duplicity, the neoconservatives are at one with the hypocritical President they only pretend to criticize. Their rumored trips to Texas to visit the governor and fill his head with their uninformed and incoherent musings on foreign policy should be a cause for alarm among the Republican conservatives who insist that a Bush II presidency will represent a real change from the Clinton years.

—*Humpty Dumpty*

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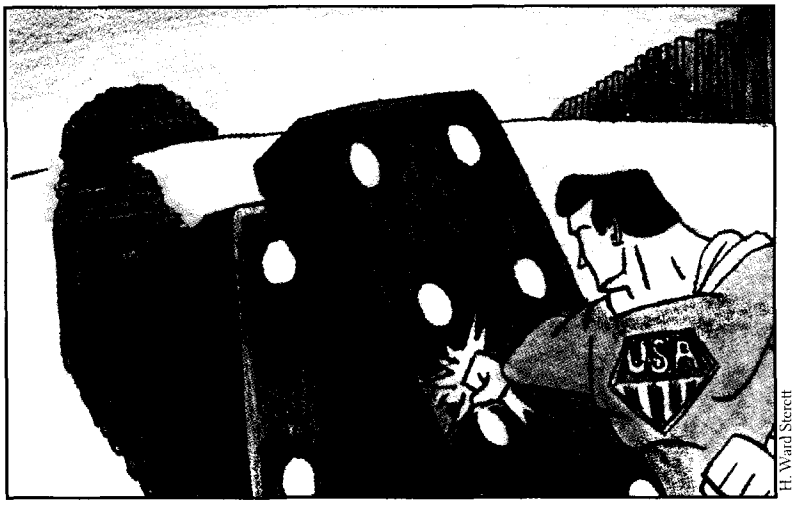
No More Perpetual War

A Foreign Policy for a Republic, Not an Empire

by Doug Bandow



With Republicans increasing social spending and Democrats upping military outlays, Washington is devoid of serious debate over any important issue. Despite the President's attacks on GOP "isolationism," both parties largely favor foreign intervention. As a result, America finds itself entangled in almost every international conflict and potential conflict: Bosnia, the Caucasus, China, Colombia, East Timor, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Kashmir, North Africa, North Korea, Russia, Taiwan, and Turkey.

And then there is Kosovo. The coalition that claimed to be conducting a war against ethnic cleansing included NATO member Turkey, which has leveled an estimated 3,000 Kurdish villages and displaced as many as two million Kurds in a guerrilla war that has killed 37,000. NATO's "humanitarian" warriors also stood by in 1995 when the Croatian military, trained by U.S. advisors, kicked hundreds of thousands of Serbs out of ancestral lands in the Krajina region, shelling and strafing refugee columns. And the allies voiced not a peep at the murder of 6,300 people in Sierra Leone in January 1999 alone, more than triple the death toll of the previous year in Kosovo.

For half a century, foreign policy centered on the principle of containment. The result was the creation of an oversized military, backed by a global network of bases and military deployments, and manned through conscription. But ten years ago, the Berlin Wall fell, the Warsaw Pact dissolved, the Soviet Union collapsed, and the threat of aggression dissipated. In short, almost the entire foundation of American foreign policy was gone.

Yet no serious reconsideration of U.S. foreign policy has occurred. The Clinton administration would like to do everything, calling its policy "enlargement." Every Asian alliance must be preserved, NATO must be expanded, and elsewhere the administration has engaged in what Michael Mandelbaum of Johns Hopkins has called "foreign policy as social work"—attempting to mend failed states and squelch ethnic hatreds. After Kosovo, the President even announced that the United States would stop ethnic cleansing in Africa and elsewhere, although his national security advisor, Sandy Berger, immediately began backpedaling.

The Republican alternative has been incoherent. The GOP favors maintaining all existing alliances. Support for South Korea should be strengthened, cooperation with Japan should be deepened, and NATO should be expanded. The only questions are how far and how fast. Republicans also back increased military spending. Although there has been some dissent on more extraneous commitments, enough GOP leaders supported military action in Bosnia, Haiti, Kosovo, and Somalia that opposition was limited largely to ineffective protest. In principle, both parties favor *Pax Americana*, although they sometimes disagree about where and when to act.

The American people spent more than $13 trillion (in current dollars) to defeat the Soviet Union. Yet all of the institutions of containment remain in place; the Cold War military es-

Doug Bandow is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. A former special assistant to President Reagan, he is the author and editor of several books, including Tripwire: Korea and U.S. Foreign Policy in a Changed World.

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tablishment is intact. Not one alliance has been dismantled; not one commitment has been eliminated. On the contrary, the U.S. government has increased guarantees and deployments almost exponentially: American planes bomb Iraq around the clock; troops are deployed in Bosnia, East Timor, Macedonia, and Kosovo; Azerbaijan is angling for a U.S. base; Uzbekistan wants military relations with NATO; and even longtime enemy North Korea is suggesting that the United States transform its troop presence into a neutral peacekeeping mission.

This globalist campaign to contain nothing is expensive, costing nearly $300 billion annually. Military spending is the price of an aggressive foreign policy: The more there is to do, the more forces and weapons are needed. In inflation-adjusted terms, Washington is spending as much on the military today as it did in 1980—during the Cold War. Outlays remain as high as in 1975, when we were coming out of the Vietnam War, and even 1965, when we were going into Vietnam. Today, America accounts for about one-third of the world's military outlays—a far higher share than during the Cold War. America spends more than three times as much as Russia, eight times as much as China, and twice as much as Britain, France, Germany, and Japan combined. U.S. "defense" spending equals that of the next ten countries, and is 17 times as much as the military expenditures of the "rogue nations" (Iraq, North Korea, *et al.*).

The United States suffers an economic disadvantage as well: America devotes roughly four percent of its GDP to the military, twice as much as Germany and four times as much as Japan. The result is a *de facto* subsidy to leading trade competitors, which means that U.S. taxpayers and businesses support research, development, and investment in other nations.

Intervention is also risky. Although the potential consequences of war have dramatically diminished since the demise of the Soviet Union, very real dangers remain. The Kosovo war resulted in confrontation with both China and Russia and strengthened India's commitment to an independent nuclear deterrent. The Korean peninsula could still erupt in war. Washington's implicit security guarantee to Taiwan could lead to conflict with China. Attacks on small countries like Yugoslavia will grow more dangerous as biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons spread. Unfortunately, wars rarely turn out as expected.

It is one thing to accept these risks as the price of protecting American security; it is quite another when the risks are run to advance the interests of other countries. Yet the three most obvious situations in which America could be drawn into a major war today—Iraq versus Kuwait/Saudi Arabia, China versus Taiwan, and North Korea versus South Korea—all involve threats to U.S. allies rather than to the United States.

The price of intervention is also paid in human lives. America's Balkan war was unique in its lack of U.S. battle casualties. However, America's overwhelming military preponderance is likely to prove transitory as other nations close the gap. Indeed, should the Kosovo occupation degenerate into a desultory civil war, Americans will see body bags coming back from overseas. It is all too easy to be humanitarian with other people's lives.

The lives may not be only those of members of the Armed Forces. Terrorism today is largely a response to U.S. intervention abroad. The World Trade Center was bombed because of Washington's policies in the Middle East. Terrorism is a means by which relatively powerless groups or nations can strike the globe's only superpower.

As we move further into the post-Cold War world, the United States could develop a new, expansive, interventionist foreign policy that justifies maintaining a Cold War military; or America could adopt a restrained foreign policy and cut military commitments, deployments, and spending accordingly.

Some advocates of the first course see new enemies everywhere. NATO expansion is obviously directed against Russia. While the rise of nationalism (spurred, alas, by the West's own actions, particularly NATO expansion and the war on Serbia) is worrisome, the Moscow Humpty Dumpty has fallen off of the wall and cannot be put back together again. Russia is only about two-thirds the size of the old Soviet Union, its economy has imploded, and its armed forces have deteriorated dramatically. The British, French, and Germans today spend more on the military than does Russia. Moreover, if those most at risk, the Europeans, feared a revived Russia, they would not have been cutting military spending. Washington's proper response is watchful wariness. There is no need to preserve a military created to defeat the Soviet Union in order to deter an anemic Russia.

China is also an unlikely enemy. The nation with the world's largest population may eventually enjoy the world's largest economy; it *will* eventually become more influential in other dimensions, including the military. China may very well become the most dominant nation in East Asia. But Chinese preeminence in Asia does not necessarily threaten the security of America. Conflict is likely only if the United States attempts to maintain its hegemony everywhere, including along China's borders.

It is difficult to imagine any other likely U.S. enemies. Germany and Japan have neither the ability nor the incentive to threaten America. Brazil, Indonesia, and India are important countries with significant long-term potential, but whatever threats they could conceivably pose in the future do not require military confrontation today. Nor do their interests seem likely to clash catastrophically with those of the United States.

Most of the arguments, then, for a leading military role today involve having the United States play something akin to globocop, acting as the world's 911 dispatcher. That has certainly been the case during the Bush-Clinton era: Among military actions in Bosnia, Haiti, Kosovo, Kuwait, Panama, and Somalia, only the war against Iraq offered even the pretext of the national interest being at stake. The rest were attempts to impose a new domestic political regime or international settlement on disorderly or failed states.

The result has not been pretty. Somalia remains divided among warring clans. The United States managed to move Haiti from a military to a presidential dictatorship. In Bosnia, Western occupation, not popular consent, holds together three hostile parties in an artificial state. Panama's government may be less hostile, but appears to be no less corrupt. In Kosovo, the killing continues, only now by ethnic Albanians.

Another argument for intervention is that the United States has to demonstrate "leadership." Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich once acknowledged that America could cut its defense budget in half if it did not have to "lead" the world. But American leadership, given this nation's economic and cultural influence, is inevitable. There is no reason why "leadership" must be predominantly military. Indeed, real leadership requires the use of discretion in deciding when and how to act, rather than intervening everywhere on behalf of everyone.

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Real leadership also requires humility. Nobel Prize-winning economist F.A. Hayek wrote of the "fatal conceit" of social planners, which is at work in U.S. foreign policy today. What is this fatal conceit? The belief that Washington has the wisdom and ability to order events in distant societies without regard to history. The belief that one can loose the dogs of war and control where they run. The belief that U.S. political leaders have the moral authority to use military force whenever they desire to engage in international social engineering.

Ironically, Washington's abusive and arrogant "leadership" may ultimately limit American influence by encouraging other nations to cooperate in order to constrain U.S. power. Both China and Russia are prepared to resist American hegemony. India has begun to move closer to its old enemy, China, to forge a countervailing coalition. During the war against Yugoslavia, New Delhi lauded its nascent atomic arsenal as a means of keeping the peace, a comment clearly directed at the world's sole remaining superpower; Indian hawks are pressing for a significant nuclear deterrent capable of striking America. In time, these nations—along with more independent European states, like France, and emerging powers, like Brazil and Indonesia—may actively oppose pretentious U.S. claims to global "leadership."

The most serious argument for American intervention in Kosovo was humanitarian. Yet it was quite impossible to take the administration's moralizing seriously. Death tolls in the millions (Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Sudan, Rwanda, Tibet), hundreds of thousands (Burundi, East Timor, Guatemala, Liberia, Mozambique), and tens of thousands (Algeria, Chechnya, Congo, Kashmir, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Turkey) are common. The estimated death toll in Kosovo was exceeded even by the number of dead in Northern Ireland's sectarian violence. Yet in none of these cases did Western leaders rise to express the outrage of the "international community," let alone propose taking action. (In September, Australia led a number of states in establishing a peacekeeping force in East Timor, but Canberra acted only with the consent of Jakarta and after standing by during a quarter-century of mass violence in the territory.)

Similarly, 7.3 million people have fled violent strife in Africa. Over the last decade, hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The government of Bhutan "cleansed" more than 100,000 ethnic Nepalese in the 1990's. There are 3.6 million refugees in the Middle East. In these cases, too, the supposed guardians of human rights have been almost entirely silent.

Perhaps nowhere is this cynicism more evident than in the case of Turkey. Like Serbia, Ankara regards separatist guerrillas as terrorists. A quarter-century ago, Turkey invaded Cyprus, created a Turkish zone, and "ethnically cleansed" its occupied territory of some 165,000 ethnic Greeks. Like Serbia, Turkey speaks of protecting its ethnic co-nationals from violence. Yet the United States not only treats Ankara as an ally; it provides many of the weapons which Turkey has used to prosecute its wars, and Washington enlisted Ankara in its crusade against ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.

There is an alternative to this policy of promiscuous meddling. It could be called many things—nonintervention, strategic independence, or military disengagement—but not isolationism. America can, and should, be highly engaged internationally, maintaining an open economic market, compassionately accepting refugees and immigrants, spreading art, music, and other cultural goods, and cooperating politically.

The philosophical point is simple: The duty of the U.S. government is, first and foremost, to protect its own citizens, their lives, freedom, and property, and the system of ordered liberty in which they live. It is not to meddle abroad in pursuit of even good ends. The lives and property of Americans are not gambit pawns for politicians to sacrifice in some global chess game.

Washington believes that the United States could reshape the world if only we could amass enough power and resources. This presumes that Washington policymakers know more than everyone else, and that other peoples, governments, and nations are shapeless lumps of clay, anxiously waiting to be molded.

This theory has proved disastrous. Consider only the experience of this century. The Treaty of Versailles sought to remake the world; two decades later the system came crashing down, as most of the globe was engulfed in a terrible war. American meddling in Vietnam, Iran, Nicaragua, Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, Zaire, and elsewhere has only added to human misery.

When assessing a conflict that seems to require U.S. intervention, policymakers have asked, "Why not?" when they should have asked, "So what?" They should assess whether the "what" affects vital, important, or only marginal interests. Their response should vary depending upon the importance of the interest at stake. A threat to the nation's very survival—*à la* nuclear war with the Soviet Union—is very different from an isolated instance of chaos within chaos—say, a three-way civil war in Liberia. The first requires official action; the second does not. Washington also needs to assess whether other actors can handle regional contingencies. Surely South Korea, with 30 times the productivity and twice the population of North Korea, is capable of defending itself. So is Japan. And Europe.

Even if the only possible response is U.S. military action, policymakers should still weigh the costs and benefits of getting involved. Perhaps Europe was unwilling to act in Kosovo without the United States. But any serious weighing of costs and benefits would have militated against intervention.

America should vigorously defend its vital interests. But Washington should accept that the world will be a messy place, and that not all messes can be cleaned up—certainly not by the United States. We should cooperate with the United Nations or other states when it is advantageous to do so, but we should not sacrifice our own interests to those of other international actors. In the end, the United States should be the distant balancer, not the immediate meddler.

As America's foreign policy changes, so should its force structure. Instead of spending $280 billion a year on the military, Washington could spend $150 billion. Instead of keeping 1.4 million people in uniform, America could lower its troop strength to 850,000. Rather than 11 carrier groups, the United States could get by with six. This would still leave America with the largest, most advanced, and most effective military on earth, capable of defending itself and cooperating with friendly states to preserve shared interests.

The United States enjoys many advantages and will remain a superpower almost in spite of itself. Washington should remain engaged and even exercise leadership, but it should not hector, control, or impose on other nations. In short, America should return to a foreign and military policy befitting a republic, rather than an empire. In this way, the United States would best preserve its independence and freedom. c

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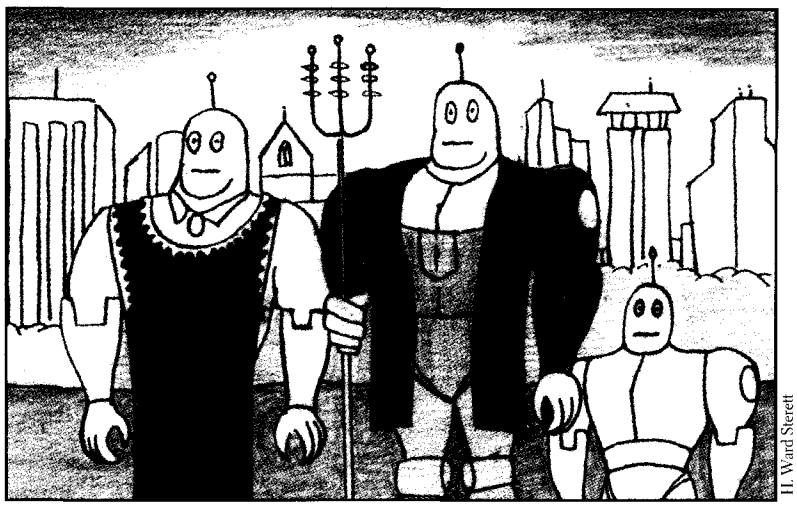
Post-Human America

It's Not Just the Balkans . . .

by Srdja Trifkovic



Ideological assumptions that but two generations ago would have been deemed eccentric, if not utterly insane or even demonic, now rule the "mainstream." The trouble is that normal people do not take madmen seriously enough. This works to the advantage of politicians—an inherently insane breed—and their subjects' attitude of "they can't be serious" allows them to sneer back, "Yes, we can!" America's foreign-policy establishment proves the point.

In a *New York Times* profile last September, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott declared that the United States may not exist "in its current form" in the 21st century because the very concept of nationhood—here and throughout the world—will have been rendered obsolete.

Now, this will come as a surprise to all those Americans who have naively assumed that the purpose of foreign policy is to ensure the survival, security, and prosperity of the United States within the international system, rather than its eventual absorption by the system. It should be noted that Talbott's statement was an exultant prophecy, not an impartial analyst's assessment, and it came from the man who has defined, shaped, and executed this administration's foreign policy since the first day of this abysmal presidency.

While his party's presidential victory was still far from certain, Talbott wrote in *Time* (July 20, 1992) that he looks forward to universal government run by "one global authority":

> Here is one optimist's reason for believing unity will prevail . . . within the next hundred years . . . nationhood as we know it will be obsolete; all states will recognize a single, global authority. . . . A phrase briefly fashionable in the mid-20th century—"citizen of the world"—will have assumed real meaning by the end of the 21st.

The key ideological foundation for Talbott's beliefs was stated bluntly: "All countries are basically social arrangements, accommodations to changing circumstances. No matter how permanent and even sacred they may seem at any one time, in fact they are all artificial and temporary."

To Talbott and his ilk, the United States, Serbia, East Timor, Ireland, Russia, Iran, China, Cuba, etc., are merely transient, virtual-reality entities. Owing allegiance to any of them is inherently irrational, and attaching one's personal loyalty to it—let alone risking one's life for its sake—is as absurd as worshipping icons or dressing for dinner. Atavistic sentiments may have to be invoked for *hoi polloi* from the prairies who provide the cannon fodder for any given project, but this odious task is best left to the front men, such as presidents.

Like Marx's proletarian, Talbott knows of no loyalty to a concrete country. He could easily serve any—or indeed all—of them, if they can be turned into the pliable tools of his *Wille zur Macht*. In 1792, it could have been France, in 1917 Russia. Today, the United States is the host organism of choice for two reasons. It is immensely powerful, and its political system is susceptible to penetration by a rabidly anti-traditionalist and deeply anti-American worldview and political agenda.

By treating America as an ideological proposition rather than a real nation, Talbott and Company at least cannot be accused of partiality when they treat other nations as either minions to

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be cowed or savages to be exterminated. They are imposing a bird's-eye view of world affairs in the process, which makes discussion of their policy possible only within their odd terms of reference. Try applying the traditional criteria of national interest, and you will be labeled a Buchananite, with all the attendant "isms" that will destroy your name and career. But if you put on their specs and think of their project as one great moral crusade on behalf of human rights and democracy everywhere, you enter the virtual world in which all pretense to meaning is abandoned.

Their playful disregard for principles and order smacks of 1960's frivolity, but it comes with a big stick. The bombing of Serbian buses, hospitals, trains, and TV stations was conducted under the label of "humanitarian intervention." The destruction of the traditional concept of sovereignty and the rule of law is a triumph of the "international community."

The former peaceniks-turned-bombers in Washington, Bonn, London, and Brussels saw the late unpleasantness in the Balkans as a major step toward the fulfillment of their One World, post-national vision. Universal human rights were invoked to justify the will of the "international community," that modern equivalent of Rousseau's "general will," which means the will of the person talking. The rule of law and respect for national sovereignty and tradition have been boldly denied. But since universal concepts are by definition deracinated, the next step will be to demand a single global system of civil law that cannot stop short of a world government. The Serbs were a litmus test, and their collapse—predictable, even unavoidable, under the unspeakable Mr. Milosevic—means that the project will march on.

For that reason, it is not just about the Balkans: In the aftermath of NATO's war, we are faced with a global problem that goes beyond "Culture Wars." It is the end of culture.

For many millennia, people lived in communities in which the bonds between them were direct and emotional. In the fertile plains of Mesopotamia and the Lower Nile, "society" eventually emerged: Relations between people were formalized and measured in terms of objects, but the individual was still the subject of his own acts, motivated by his feelings and needs. But by the middle of the 20th century, society had evolved into a vastly complex social-technological system, and man was reduced to a mere element—the "human factor."

In our own time, what the ruling elite would call "ideology"—and what our grandparents would call spirituality—has been replaced by "content," by information. The process is accelerating by the day, and culture as a mechanism for maintaining social identity and coherence is becoming obsolete. Wealth, success, and health are the only "values" in the information era. The soul, emotional experiences, personal opinion—all these are regarded as waste that distracts from production or from the precise execution of instructions. Culture, if not already embalmed and relegated to "heritage," is automatically designated "traditional." The real end of history—the complete transformation of society into a social-technological system—would signify the end of mankind's cultural history. It would also signify the end of mankind.

Yes, and it is all for the best, according to Prof. Jon Huer at the University of Maryland, whose musings on the future were noted in *Signs of the Times* (July 1999). For Huer, the bombing by Americans and human-shielding by Serbs represented two very different worlds. The high technology "of ultimate sophistication, so logical and so rational, with little human involvement," is countered by "the total disregard of logic and rationality." Americans believe in the power of technology "and all that it implies—reason, logic, practicality, solution-finding." Serbs believe in the power of their destiny, "powerful, and so human." "Americans," he says,

> are now entering a wholly different era of society and culture . . . a "Post-Human Era" where all aspects of social life are streamlined and rationalized . . . [and] each individual is isolated from other individuals so that his or her self-calculation can be logically derived without distraction from other human beings.

Huer believes that post-human Americans are probably "the future prototype humans," while Serbs are "an atavistic holdover from a bygone era." He concludes that the Serbs have "to recognize this inevitable development of history and join up with what will be, not what was or should be."

Try applying the traditional criteria of national interest, and you will be labeled a Buchananite, with all the attendant "isms" that will destroy your name and career.

This gem of brutal honesty indicates why it is not just the Balkans anymore. Between the "prototype rational post-humans"—epitomized by Clinton, Albright, Berger, Cohen, Blair, and Cook—and the atavistic, irrational humans, each of us needs to make a choice. The former will rely on America's continuing technological and military superiority, not on its moral authority or political magnetism. As British historian Michael Stenton has put it:

> Victims and opponents are invited to contemplate the strength of a dominant culture, and despair. The experience in the Balkans today is of resourcelessness. One must plug into the West—its power centers and its culture—and pray for favor, and try to be noticed in the right way. Hence the readiness of Balkan countries to damage themselves to help America damage Serbia. Looking for favor is the only game in town. If only it were just the money! Imperial culture—today one says global culture—confiscates respect for what is local and native and replaces it with something universal, however bad.

The Balkans—humanitarian bombings, multicultural Muslims, rape camps, and all—was the post-humans' exercise in counterrealism, which is the essence of postmodernism. "Jamie" Shea and "Jamie" Rubin (note the cute nicknames retained by these presumed grown-ups) move beyond truth and reality, just as their more arty counterparts move beyond the limits of the aesthetic. The reversibility of the signifier and the

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signified, aggressor and victim, ethnic cleanser and ethnically cleansed, eventually eliminates the creator and—ultimately—the subject, leaving nothing but the subject's "signature," in the form of bomb craters if need be.

This is the "culture" of the artificial world, of post-historical, technological man who has lost his bond with nature, surrounded by artificial reality and permeated by it. The "Jamies" of this world are literally beyond conscience, and in case of a hitch, paid professionals are there to release them from the burden of moral choices.

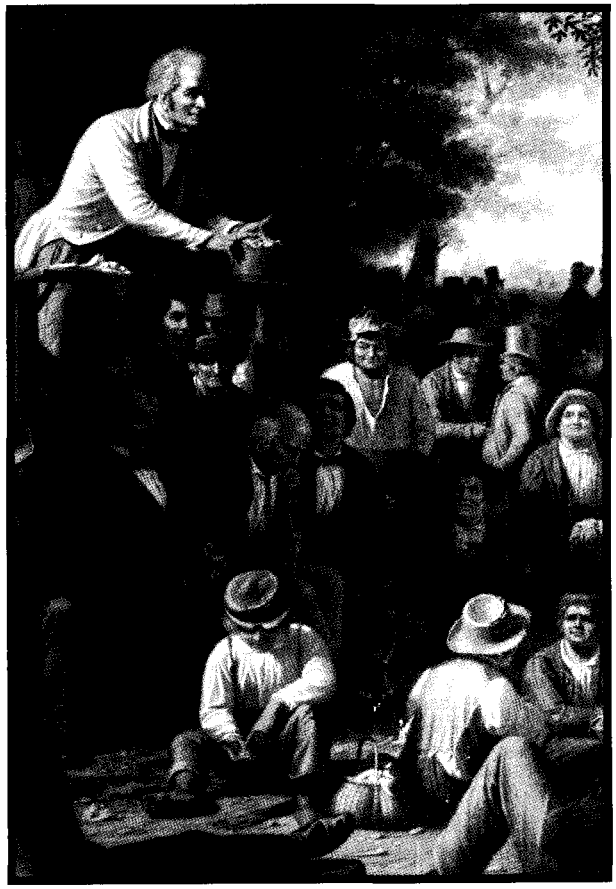
This is manifested in foreign affairs in the obliteration of the ethnic identity of peoples, their special color and uniqueness, in the loss of diversity of social evolution that goes with the diminishing diversity of nature. A crude *Gleichschaltung* is performed under the ideology of universal human values, of a homogenized "culture" for the whole world. As befits the postmodern world, the proponents of "diversity" are in fact promoting its exact opposite: social-technological monism.

The destroyers of human culture are emboldened by demographic trends on both sides of the northern Atlantic. They believe that the seemingly obvious futility of resistance will force the remaining atavistic humans everywhere—especially in America's heartland—to accept the inevitable and merge with the post-humans through spiritual and physical degeneration and loss of cultural identity. They are in hot pursuit of global power for its own sake—that Great Temptation and path of ruin that winds from the Persian King of Kings to Hitler. They like the fact that most of our fellow citizens, steeped in state school-induced amnesia and ignorance, have never heard of the former and have only the foggiest of notions about the latter.

They hope and trust that nobody will listen when we warn that our rulers are doing all over the world today what Athens did in Greece after leading the Hellenic coalition against Persia: trying to turn leadership into hegemony. The result was destruction of Hellas as a political and military factor for all time, and America will just as surely be destroyed if its rulers are allowed to proceed with their mad quest for the *Weltmacht*. But our foreign-policy elites—poorly educated, rootless, arrogant, inimical to traditional values and morals, cynically manipulative, and ultimately criminal—are tipsy on their brew of "benevolent global hegemony" and march boldly on. Their co-conspirators in the courtier press and the new academia are calling it a pilgrimage. Bosnia was the litmus test, and they claim it worked. Kosovo was a well-rehearsed sequel.

With each new murder that the post-humans commit abroad, the task of resistance at home becomes more difficult. But there are many atavistic holdovers from the human past who will refuse to believe that the outcome is preordained. The struggle of real people for survival is natural and inevitable and good—even if the outcome is far from certain. We may disappear, but we will not cease to hold on to life and beauty and truth.

The Serbs may be the first to perish, but the best among them will not despair. They remember, from that first Battle of Kosovo in 1389, that the world is a cosmos ruled by God, not chaos ruled by men (even those of the post-human variety). If their lonely suffering prods or shames others into struggle for survival, their Calvary will not have been in vain. The path of survival thus starts with understanding that the bell tolls not just for the Serbs: It tolls for all of us. c



MAIN STREET

THE MAIN STREET SPEAKERS BUREAU

Anarcho-Tyranny, the Balkans, Bullfighting, Crime, the Culture War, Defense, Education, Federalism, Fertility, Gambling, Greek, Guns, *Homo Economicus*, Immigration, the Interstate Highway System, Islam, Judicial Tyranny, Kosovo, Latin, Lyric Poetry, Marriage and Family, Middle American Rebels, Nationalism, the Old West, Politics, Private Justice, Quantum Mechanics, Revenge, School Consolidation, Subsidiarity, the Tenth Amendment, Trade, the United Nations, Vouchers, Welfare, the X-*Files*, Yugoslavia, Zoning . . .

Is there anything *Chronicles* editors can't speak on?
(Okay, we're still looking for a physicist.)

For a complete list of speakers and topics, contact Aaron Wolf at (815) 964-5811

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Come Home, America

Confessions of a Place-ist

by Bill Kauffman

H. Ward Sterett

Greetings from New York, where a new hate crime is taking shape: It is called "place-ism," and it will be defined in the criminal code as the belief that a particular place, be it a neighborhood, village, city, or state, is superior to any other place, and that the residents of this place have a history, customs, accent, or concerns that are different from those of other places. (Dr. Alvin Pouissant will soon recommend that place-ists be incarcerated in nuthouses; though thanks to the labors of the valorous Tipper Gore, at least our copay will be very low.)

An outbreak of virulent place-ism has greeted the senatorial campaign of Hillary Rodham Clinton, despite the conciliatory editorials of the Gannett papers and despite Mrs. Clinton's assertion that "where I'm from is not as important as what I'm for."

If Hillary does indeed run, she probably will lose, a victim of place-ism, martyr to atavistic home-philia. Recall that the only reason the carpetbagger Bobby Kennedy defeated New York Sen. Ken Keating in 1964 is that Angie Dickinson's floorboard had been killed a year earlier. Mrs. Clinton, note well.

The unwelcome wagon that has been rolled out for Hillary in the real New York is not much more hostile than what George W. Bush met when he ran for Congress in West Texas in 1978. A Yale preppie who could not even pronounce the name of his district's largest city, a necrophiliac Skull and Bonesman among Aggies, George W. said, through tears, at the press conference after his defeat, that there was a word to explain why he lost: "provincialism."

God save provincialism—God save place-ism—God save the village green: the love of home, of neighbors, of the eccentric and the Rotarian, the eccentric Rotarian too, because provincials are all that stand between us and the people in grey: George W. Bush and Hillary Clinton, Tony Blair and Bill Gates. The provincials are the party of peace and liberty and friendship: of those qualities never found in the *Federal Register* or a Heritage Foundation backgrounder.

Bill Kauffman's books include Every Man a King *and* America First! Its History, Culture, and Politics. *This article is adapted from his October 1999 speech to The John Randolph Club.*

Unlike the alleged cokehead who seeks to be the next miserable president from Texas, I feel a twinge when I wax too hypocritical. In my own young and irresponsible youth, I cashed a government paycheck for a couple of years as a legislative assistant to a liberal U.S. senator before taking to heart the advice of Henry Thoreau: "If the tax-gatherer, or any other public officer, asks me, as one has done, 'but what shall I do?' my answer is, 'if you really wish to do anything, resign your office.' When the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned his office, then the revolution is accomplished."

I know, I know: Tell it to Janet Reno.

In any event, I am in the position of Drew Barrymore advising teenage girls to save themselves for marriage. I will not engage in cheap Washington-bashing, having been so admonished by David Broder and Bill Bennett—or, should I say, by the mediocre but very underpaid factotum who actually writes the words attributed to the Republican Party's leading intellectual. I do not detest what is in fact a beautiful city: Washington, the Washington of Jefferson and Benton, of La Follette and Taft, of Henry Adams and John Hay, of Clark Clifford and Gary Bauer. Gary Bauer: If this is the face of family values, give me William S. Burroughs any day. One of my favorite Bauer lines was when he advised a conference of budding conservative movement hangers-on: "As for life inside the Beltway, don't come here. The values are warped. If I could find a way to make a living, I'd be back in the heartland in a minute."

I once wrote a novel, *Every Man a King*, whose tenth anniversary came and went this past May with nary a *festschrift*. The book was about a young smart-aleck who works for a senator in D.C.; he sins, at least as sin is defined in the Potomac catechism, and is cast out, homeward, to live among the people he has celebrated with a mawkish insincerity seldom seen this side of the Nashville Network.

Not to spoil the ending for the handful of folks who have never devoured this classic—and you call yourselves well-read?—but the revenant returns for good. Because I, too, had taken the downbound train to D.C. and back, folks seemed to think the novel was autobiographical. It was not, but I did learn a valu-

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able lesson: Never make your protagonist sexually maladroit. You will get nothing but pitying stares from friends and tears of mortification from your mother.

Like my doughtily dysfunctional hero, I did go home, for good. And for better. I have written about this at length in *Chronicles* and elsewhere, so to nip your "there-he-goes-agains" in the bud, I will say only that healthy, life-giving parochialism exists in even the most dispirited and quotidian places, that we—or at least I—can only ever really love the familiar, and that rage and anger require the anchorage of love lest they become exhausting and pointless hatred.

Toiling for a maverick liberal drove me not to drink but to libertarianism, yet the motive force of ideology has long since faded for me, the more deeply embedded I become in my native place. I would rather write a booklet on Batavia's greatest architect and excavate the life of a lady painter, my great-grandmother's dear friend, and write our county's bicentennial play or just drive around picking up donated ratty furniture for the historical society's yard sale than rail against the state. I would rather practice an anarchy based on love than preach a sterile liberty. All right—that's enough of *that*, Miss Barrymore.

I think the disjunction between Washington conservatives and real American places is summed up in the first 15 seconds of the Rush Limbaugh show. Those who endure Rush know his theme song, which is always cut short before it gets interesting, as with Rush's show itself. The music is from the Pretenders' song "Back to Ohio," in which Chrissie Hynde describes a return to her hometown of Akron, Ohio, where "all my favorite places" have been urban-renewalized into memory. "I went back to Ohio / but my city was gone / There was no train station / there was no downtown . . . "—a bitter and sardonic observation on how the destruction of landmarks erodes a sense of place, of loyalty. But this is not something that the happy-talk right of the Fortune 500 wishes to hear.

Well, Chrissie did not move back to Ohio. Like Gary Bauer, she probably would not have made nearly as much money sitting around in the Firestone parking lot, in the words of a sister Akronite. She might not have been *famous*, and that is what really counts, isn't it?

It is too easy for an annoying note of self-satisfaction to creep into the narratives of those who do return home. On the other hand, we as observers are sometimes made uncomfortable by what seems a suicidal adherence to principle.

Elmer Kelton, the dean of Western writers, wrote a terrific novel some years back called *The Time It Never Rained*, about a West Texas rancher named Charlie Flagg who stands alone in his county in refusing government aid during a seemingly endless drought. He is wiped out by his stubbornness, but he retains his soul, at least.

Flagg's example is a constant reproach to his neighbors, self-styled rugged individualists who, in taking Washington's dollar, have essentially turned over the management of their ranches to the federal government. So he is resented in the way that men ofttimes garrote saints. Or the way the Progress Gang spews venom at Wendell Berry: His critics would like nothing better than to see Berry chained to a Barcalounger and force-fed microwave burritos and Starbucks coffee while he watches Adam Sandler movies and his grandkids frolic about the den in Hard Rock Cafe T-shirts playing Pokémon. In his integration of work, family, home, and local patriotism, Berry is the old American dream made flesh, and his example is a rebuke to every typewriter agrarian, high-rise localist, and Georgetown bar-hopping secessionist. Or as the Jack Nicholson character says to Wyatt and Billy in *Easy Rider*, "They gonna talk to you and talk to you about individual freedom, but they see a free individual, it's gonna scare 'em."

Like Wendell Berry scares 'em. Or Carolyn Chute. Edward Abbey. Gore Vidal. Pat Buchanan. Or the homeschooling family that refuses to raise its children to be querulous consumers or good Microsoft employees.

In *The Time It Never Rained*, an exasperated Charlie Flagg explains, "I'm not sayin' any man is wrong because he doesn't pattern himself after me; what anybody else wants to do is *his* business, not mine. I just want to live by my own lights and be left the hell alone."

If only it were possible. But Charlie Flagg is not left alone, any more than Edward Abbey's brave cowboy was left alone; a splinter sect of the Seventh-Day Adventist church down in Flagg's Texas was not even left alone. So do we have any choice *but* to march on Washington, to write our congressmen, to concede that, like it or not, Washington matters? Place-ists do.

There is a wall out there, located somewhere between Ronald Reagan airport and the FDR Memorial, on which is inscribed the names of 50,000-plus farmboys and working-class whites and Southern and city blacks who were not left the hell alone; who were offered up as a sacrifice by the "greatest generation," as Tom Brokaw's ghostwriter termed what in fact was, politically, the most conformist generation in American history, the generation that destroyed the Old Republic, the generation of urban renewal and IBM and the suburban high school and bringing the Great Society to Southeast Asia and electing Franklin D. Roosevelt four times and regarding long hair and rock music and pot-smoking as sinful but sending your boys halfway around the globe to die for Robert McNamara as a supreme act of patriotism. (I should say that I exempt my family and friends and the family and friends of all readers from these strictures.)

My dad has a book put out by the Gold Star Mothers of Genesee County containing pictures and brief biographies of the Genesee boys who died in World War II. I look at their faces and think of them dying alone halfway around the globe, their guts spilled into some foreign soil or depressingly vast ocean, and I wonder about the lives they would have lived had the American side of the great debate of 1940-41 prevailed. Nunzio working at Doehler-Jarvis, Judd taking his father's place at the bar. Would we have been spared the bad habits and destructive patterns of behavior picked up in our subsequent years of empire? In my hometown, the greatest generation—the one we had, not the one we might have had—came home and in 1946 knocked down all the trees to widen Main Street, then knocked down Main Street itself because "experts" with college degrees told them to, then they sent their children out to beg, sit, and roll over to earn those same degrees, whereupon they took jobs far away from dad, so distant that in millions of sad cases the job of "grandparent" has been stripped of any function beyond shipping videogames to the little brats come Christmas. (Or winter holidays, should I say?) But at least the grandkids attend good schools with lots of computers and high average SATs. Hit 'em high, hit 'em low, go-ooo, Columbine!

This whole notion of moving somewhere to take a job is one of the sharpest and cleanest of class dividers. Virtually everyone who lives and works in Washington or on Wall Street has migrated for money or power, "the vain low strife that makes men

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mad." It is almost beyond their ken, past the outermost limits of their understanding, why someone would *not* move when "opportunity" rears its meretricious head.

Consider, for instance, the favorite recent movie of the conservative culture-vulture set, *October Sky*. This is a moving, poignant, funny, wonderfully acted story of a Coalwood, West Virginia, boy whose dream, which we are encouraged to share—in fact, which we are assumed to share, in the same way that it is assumed that if a character has some horrible disease we want her to get better—is to leave this "bunch of hillbillies" and become a federal employee. Truculent old daddy, hacking away with the coal cough, says, "Boy, you'd better take an interest in your own damn town" instead of Werner von Braun, but in the end cranky dad loves his son Homer—an inappropriate name—and is duly proud when the boy rides his rockets out of Coalwood and to a career with NASA.

This is a sweet movie with a poisonous core. I can imagine George W. Bush and Steven Spielberg and Sumner Redstone dabbing their eyes, blinking back the tears as they watch it, because the men who run the major institutions in this country—the government, the Fortune 500, Hollywood—have, almost to a man, abandoned the Coalwoods of their childhood to float their lives away among a placeless elite, purged of such debilitatingly prole-ish and provincial biases as place-ism.

They are welcome to their world. The problem is, they will not let the rest of us be. For almost 60 years, the placeless have waged war on the rooted, stealing their children, devastating their neighborhoods, wiping out every local peculiarity and idiosyncrasy they could find. This has been done through the never-ending wars, hot and cold, that the American Empire wages against any villain or stumblebum or ebon renegade unlucky enough to amble into its crosshairs. The onslaught has included busing, consolidation of schools, the Interstate Highway System, the subsidizing of colleges and universities, public housing construction that displaces the urban poor and shatters working-class neighborhoods . . . in other words, 60 years of vital center domestic and foreign policy.

What we have is class war—though this war has never been acknowledged because the casualties are places and attachments and sentiments; nothings, really; everythings, in fact—waged by the mobile against the immobile, by the cosmopolitan against the rooted, and the winners are the professionals, people so depraved that they would actually *move* to a different place for mere money. How bizarre.

The sanest, most congenial response to this war would be that of the antebellum Connecticut poet James Gates Percival:

> I leave the world of noise and show;
> to wander by my native brook
> I ask, in life's unruffled flow,
> no treasure but my friend and book.

Alas, as an occasional arrestee once put it, they just won't let you be. And yet we ought to be cautious before signing on to one of the Washington teams in this war, because both sides are pushing toward the same end zone.

For instance: Richard Cohen (Ellen Goodman with a little less testosterone) recently wrote, "Community, at least our traditional sense of it, is being shattered." What he meant by this was: "Once, American families sat before a single TV set and watched the same program. Now everyone goes to his or her own room and watches what he or she pleases. Once America spent its mornings talking about the TV shows from the night before. We were one audience. Not anymore."

That is Richard Cohen's idea of old-fashioned community: sitting around a TV set watching Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., impersonate a human being.

And so official Washington is riven by the great debate of the age: On one side, the dynamos of globalism—the WTO and Bill Clinton and the progressive Republicans who want a computer at every school desk—the party of the 21st century. And on the other side, playing Calhoun to their Webster, the traditionalists: Richard Cohen, Hillary Clinton, Senator Lieberman—the party of V-chips and an FBI-monitored Internet and the whole family sitting around the TV watching Rosie O'Donnell. This is the reactionary side in Washington, and their grand idea now has a name: "civil society," a virtual key to the 501(c)3 bank, whereby rootless professors who could not name three neighbors if their lives depended on it sit around and pontificate about "intermediate institutions" and, if they are really unlucky, listen to monologues by communitarian guru Amitai Etzioni, who might benefit from that intermediate institution known as the English-as-a-second-language class.

In a choice as agonizing as that facing the hungry traveler who must choose between a Whopper and a Quarter-Pounder, the civil-society Democrats are splitting between Albert Gore and Bill Bradley. Al Gore, son of Armand Hammer's errand boy, a lad whose boyhood home in the Fairfax Hotel was paid for by Hammer, a Soviet agent—a stunner even to an anti-Cold War peacenik like me. Gore's father's only legislative accomplishment was his sponsorship of the Interstate Highway System, which created the sprawl that so vexes his charismatic son's speechwriters.

And then Bill Bradley, who was described to me by the fellow who tutored him when he joined the Senate Finance Committee as "the dumbest Rhodes Scholar in history." Bradley's campaign chairman recently told the *New York Times* that his man could win Southern votes because "even in the South, you drive down the street and you see the same Blockbusters, the same McDonald's. Now, Wal-Marts are in the Northeast." The bane of my town is the hope of his campaign.

Bradley calls himself "a citizen of the world," which is to say he is a citizen of no place in particular. Among his sugar daddies is the CEO of Starbucks. Making us one world, one cup of sludge at a time. I suppose President Bradley's first act will be to send Lon Horiuchi and the FBI to Portland, Maine, where some loathsome vandals keep breaking the windows of the Portland Starbucks. The old sabby cat that the Wobblies serenaded is alive and well: French farmers are smashing the windows of their McDonald's, evidently unpropitiated by the appearance of french fries on the menu. You deserve a brick today . . .

One of the expressions I hate most is "get a life." This is generally used by people whose lives are defined for them by the corporate media. They sneer "get a life" to those whose passions—stamp collecting, squash growing, writing poetry about baseball—fall outside the bounds of the world as demarcated by Rupert Murdoch. For those Gap-wearers ever ready to advise those incorrigible losers who have never seen *Dawson's Creek* to "get a life," this past summer was, to borrow the lapidary phrase one minicon applied to the Bush administration, a hell of a ride. The summer of '99: We all cried when John-John died. Our prince stolen from us, all too soon. We are left to wonder what *George* magazine might have become.

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But our so-called lives knew joy as well. Who can ever forget the U.S. women's soccer team? Brianna and Brandi and Mia: When that winning goal was scored, we cried, too, at least those of us who were awake.

The soccer ball: that leathery symbol of British imperialism, taken up by collaborators in every country that had the misfortune to find itself under the British bootheel. The Shah of Iran used it to Westernize his subjects; Nike is spending $50 million on Project 2010, its pestilential campaign to infect American children with this foreign virus. Among my heroes are the Zulus who, in the 19th century, rioted and ripped soccer balls to shreds after watching British sailors play the infernal game. (The recent ballyhooed "A Call to Civil Society," signed by such usual suspects as Francis Fukuyama, Cornel West, James Q. Wilson, and the unavoidable Senator Lieberman, gushes that "youth soccer has acquired a profound public significance." As Jim Garrison said, it's all starting to come together.)

Before World War II, when book-length poems were actually published without NEA subvention and bought by people who intended to read them and often did, Josephine Young Case, the daughter of electro-mogul Owen D. Young of General Electric, wrote *At Midnight on the 31st of March*, a fantasy in which a small Upstate New York town awakes to find that it has been cut off from the rest of the world—if, indeed, the rest of the world even exists anymore. After an initial period of bewilderment, Mrs. Case's townfolk of Saugersville survive by dint of cooperative effort, native ingenuity, and the use of those resources indigenous to the area. The older ones begin to remember:

> When Saugersville set fashions for itself,
> I mean to say we had our own ways here
> That weren't the ways of Centerfield or Steck,
> Much less the ways of any city place
> Where most of us had never been at all.

After a year of isolation, "they knew each other as they never had"; they come to realize:

> The life is harder than it used to be,
> But troubles are more real. We're thankful that
> What's bad, or good, is right beneath your hand,
> You know just where you're at, and what to do.
> We're all of us more real, and more alive,
> And Saugersville is real, more like a town,
> And not just a gas-pump on a concrete road.

All of us more real: *They* have gotten a life.

Imagine waking up in a world with no Michael Eisner, no Rupert Murdoch, no Bill and Hillary Clinton, no George W. Bush, no Robin Williams, no Microsoft or Gannett or Wal-Mart . . . you may say that I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one.

"Locality gives art," said Robert Frost, and any step, any act we take to bring back locality, to resuscitate the parochial, to invigorate the provincialism that thwarted the cocaine dreams of young George Bush, is thus an act of hope and love and beauty. Thomas Craven wrote in the 1930's that "the only outlet, the sole means of escape, for the American painter, lies in the discovery of the local essence," by which he did not mean a PBS hootenanny but anything from Grant Wood to Zora Neale Hurston to Donald Davidson to the Coen brothers' *Fargo*, one of the only movies I have ever seen that admits, even celebrates, the fact that people who live outside television anchor sets often speak in peculiar dialects.

One painting of the Tonawanda Creek is better than five million pieces of computerized mail trying to steal the widow's mite. The earringed community college teacher whose labors have gotten the children's stories of our native son John Gardner into fourth-grade classrooms across the county is doing what a thousand Falls Church minarchists burrowed in the Department of Education can never do. The elderly spinster who writes a history of her Triangle Club is satisfied in a way that Elizabeth Dole never can be, no matter how many pills her husband pops. The father who might drink a bit too much beer and curse a blue streak but who walks his son through town, pointing out where the Tracys lived, where they used to play football in the autumn twilight, where Jack the Indian used to hunker down for the night to sleep it off, is living "family values" in a way that Gary Bauer cannot even dream of, even if he says "gee-whillikers" and drinks grape Nehi.

Several years ago, I had the displeasure of evaluating, for a university press, a book of essays by professors and staff at St. Lawrence University about the North Country of New York, the American arctic, Frederick Exley land. One professor's wife, a lady from downstate who had obviously moved for money, complained that her efforts to make conversation with the local women always came to naught, for they insisted on talking about the weather, remarking on hot spells and cold stretches, and never about "the front page of the *New York Times*." Indeed, she harbored dark suspicions that these women were wholly unfamiliar with the prose stylings of A.M. Rosenthal.

Like George W. Bush, she probably uses "provincial" as an epithet. To her, Washington matters. But hers is the America of *Time* magazine; there also exists a time-less America, an America willing to fight for its precious insularity against the citizens of the world who believe they own our country.

"America, turn in and find yourself," urged the Iowa poet Paul Engle in those mid-century years when such advice was deemed treasonous. Iowa existed not for its own sake but as a colony which would send corn and boys to the empire. And if one of those boys had the pluck to ask "why?" as Bill Williams of Atlantic, Iowa, did, he was anathematized by Cold War liberals and ridiculed by Washington/New York conservatives, the same pallid creatures who made fun of George McGovern's beautiful campaign slogan, "Come home, America." But then, whatever homes they once had had long since been abandoned.

It is not that Washington and New York City and Hollywood are out of touch or unresponsive—rather, they are our enemies. Resistance is futile, or so they would have us believe. And besides, you have a choice: Coke or Pepsi. Bush or Gore. Disney or Dreamworks. Wal-Mart or K-Mart. CBS or CNN. Gannett or Knight-Ridder. George Stephanopolous or Bill Kristol. C'mon, stop complaining. Get a life.

When the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned his office, then the revolution is accomplished. Buy from your neighbor. Grow your own. Turn off the TV. Vote for Pat—or Harry or Joe or the Greens or the lady next door. Read your ancestors. Put flowers by their graves. Paint your block. Avenge what is lost; laugh.

Commit place-ism. With joy and impunity.

c

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AMERIKA

(Beograd, 1999)

by Matija Beckovic

Some boys my age in Kolashin
Back in 1950-something
Set off on horses
to escape to America.

The posse caught them at the edge of town
In back of the first privies and pigsties
But if they had reached the bend in the road and the thickets
They could have easily made it,
Fallen plump onto the bosom of America.
Only the vigilant forces of law and order
Prevented that catastrophe.

They got up with the birds
and set off at the crack of dawn
To make it to America in time
But the sun was hardly up
When they were marched through town,
Along with the stolen horses,
Dressed in trousers of many colors and checkered shirts
with a sign hung round the neck:
"I wanted to escape to America."

It was high noon when the decree was read
Expelling them from all the schools in the country
Short shrift that very day
At first dusk, when they had hoped
To be spread out at ease
Like a drop of water on America's palm,
They were hauled off in irons
cuffed tight to the Islands of Hell.

Escape across the border
Was the only way of going abroad
And if it were not for the watch-dog on the wire
Running up and down the length of the state
The whole nation would have long ago escaped.

Those who had got out from under the knife
Retreated across the border
They were already in America
Together with our King
Eagerly waiting for us to keep them company.

But if they did not let us go to America
They could not forbid America
To come to us
If not by the St. Elijah's Feast in August
Then by Christmas
If not by Christmas
Certainly by Easter
In prison darkness the light is kindled from outside.

And when at last the Berlin Wall came down
And all the prisons made of that same stone
My boyhood friends they called the Yanks came out into the sunshine
And like the ant that grows wings in old age
With hats off beside the transistor radio
They listened to the Voice of America
Expecting them to report the name of that nation
The greatest little nation in the world
Or so they thought
The Hero of the word that is given and kept
Felled for liberty and America
Which liberty gave birth to
And treason killed
All of which America knew best
And wrote down in the book of truth
Which is kept safe in the sacred ark
In the heart of America
Which it will open now and start to read . . .

But the Voice of America was reporting from another world
Constantly repeating its new slogan
WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THE PAST
And threatening to toast the Serbs
No later than Christmas
Which meant certainly by Easter
And as they from time to time repeated
WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THE PAST
Speaking the words
As if they were falling leaf for leaf
And becoming themselves part of the past
And with them America receded into the past
Knocked down with the Berlin Wall
Vanished with Communism.

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"All the News Unfit to Print"

Signs of the Times

Vol. 2 No. 3 March 2000

When two heterosexuals murder a homosexual, it is a "hate crime" to be splashed over the nation's front pages for weeks on end. When two homosexuals brutally rape, torture, and murder a 13-year old boy—as they did last September in Arkansas—it is news unfit to print.

A 13-year-old named Jesse Dirkhising was killed on September 26 in Rogers, Arkansas. The police affidavit describing the crime is utterly nauseating; the following is from a far less graphic Associated Press report:

> According to police, Davis Carpenter Jr., 38, and Joshua Brown, 22, drugged and blindfolded Jesse Dirkhising, gagged him with underwear, and strapped him to a mattress face-down with duct tape and belts. Then the boy was repeatedly raped and sodomized with various objects before he suffocated. . . . At the apartment police found handwritten instructions and a diagram of how to position the boy. Other notes described apparently unfulfilled fantasies of molesting other children. . . . On the night of Jesse's death Brown repeatedly raped the boy while Carpenter watched, police said. Brown took a break to eat a sandwich, and soon noticed the boy had stopped breathing.

The AP report omitted several abhorrent details about the murder; but more noteworthy than the whitewashing is the date of the story. It appeared on October 29—*more than a month after the boy was killed*. The crime occurred a few days before the first anniversary of Matthew Shepard's murder. The only major media outlets to report it—as far as we are aware—were the *Washington Times*, the *Boston Globe* and Fox News TV.

Our courtier press accurately reflects the current regime's belief that morality is not a function of "objective" behavior but of the place of the actor within the ideological system. The killing of Christians by Muslims is a case in point. Remember Ambon, which we mentioned in this space in October? The grim religious war there continues unabated. According to a routine Reuters report (December 30):

> Fresh ethnic and religious clashes erupted in Indonesia's ravaged spice islands on Thursday, raising the death toll from almost a week of fighting to at least 328 . . . "Up until Thursday, three days of quarrel between groups in the district of Tobelo (Halmahera) left 265 dead," Indonesia's armed forces said in a statement . . . At least 360 buildings were razed, including churches and mosques. . . . The violence followed similar clashes in Ambon, where at least 63 people were killed and more than 100 were injured this week. . . . The killings bring to close to 500 the number who have died in violence this month . . . About 1,000 people have died in almost a year of largely sectarian violence in the islands, once held up as a model of religious tolerance in predominantly Muslim Indonesia . . .

Of course, 1,000 dead Muslims in Sanjak would be more than enough for the U.S. Air Force to rev up its engines for another bout of Serb-killing. The inequality of Balkan geese and ganders in the eyes of the West was pointed out by the former Australian prime minister, Malcolm Fraser, in his summary of one of the top stories of the year (*International Herald Tribune*, December 22):

> NATO's actions were directed not just against the Serbian military but also against the people of Serbia. Homes, hospitals, even refugee centers did not escape. . . . Does illegality become sanctioned when the illegality is perpetrated by the most powerful? There were alternatives—the exercise of wisdom as opposed to unreasoned conflict. Even after the war, the West is reluctant to learn any lessons. Sanctions hurt the poorest of the poor. Because of the current cold winter in central Europe, it is likely that many old and very young people will die because there is insufficient heating to sustain life. In all of this tragedy, Serbia and Serbs worldwide have been demonized. There are no saints in the Balkans, but the history and bitternesses there are too old and ingrained to be susceptible to quick Western solutions.

The one "lesson of Kosovo" that the Europeans have learned is that they need to act jointly to counter the arrogance of the United States. The U.S. media seem to ignore signs of European apprehension with U.S. policy in the aftermath of Kosovo. A remarkably blunt statement by the German chancellor (AP, December 28) went all but unreported here:

> Europe must act more like a single country if it wants to challenge U.S. economic and political dominance, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said Tuesday. Asked in a television interview whether the United States lacked consideration for its allies, Schroeder said: "Yes, that certainly is so. . . . Whining about U.S. dominance doesn't help. We have to act."

Russians may be forgiven if they feel prompted to act, forcefully and soon, when they see the brazen hypocrisy of our opinion creators over Chechnya. Take the

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Washington Post editorial of December 12, which began with the admission that, "in many ways," Russia had more justification for intervention in Chechnya than . . . no, not the United States in Kosovo, but *Serbia* in Kosovo! The editorial then takes a sharp turn:

> But whatever sympathy Russia therefore might have enjoyed for its campaign it has squandered with methods that echo all too familiarly those of Mr. Milosevic. Not only the looting, but also the indiscriminate shelling of civilians; the creation and mistreatment of hundreds of thousands of refugees; and, according to sketchy accounts, the abuse of prisoners and suspected "terrorists"—all this goes far beyond what might have been justified by difficult circumstances.

But the *Post*'s outrage is completely at odds with its editorial of April 18:

> It's inevitable in a democracy with a free press that an allied bombing accident that kills dozens of civilians will garner as much attention as an adversary's murder of hundreds or even thousands of innocent people. The concern is legitimate; NATO should be pressed to account for its actions. But it's also important not to lose sight of the larger point. The victims of NATO's mistakes were on the road, like hundreds of thousands of others, because [of] the troops of Slobodan Milosevic. . . .

The logic behind this reasoning was dissected by Matt Taibi in *eXile* (No. 24, December 12), an excellent Internet magazine published from Moscow:

> America gets to do the Machiavelli thing—the "ends" in Kosovo justify the "means"—but Russia doesn't. Russia has a good reason to go into Chechnya, but the way it's going about it [is wrong] so it should get out. The way we're going about the Kosovo operation [is wrong], but we have a good reason to be there, so it's OK.

John Laughland's travelogue in the *Spectator* of London (December 18) gives the real flavor of postwar Kosovo, unlike the thousands of fact-free stories our own fourth estate has force-fed us since the beginning of the NATO occupation:

> Six months after its liberation by Nato, the province continues to wallow in chaos and squalor. . . . By day, Kosovo resembles India. The throng and press of people on the streets are matched only by the appalling traffic jams, caused by the sudden influx of stolen cars, the constant flow of articulated lorries bringing aid, and the endless gigantic tanks which Kfor troops unnecessarily use to move around in. There is mud everywhere. . . . Meanwhile, the great self-referential world of international organizations has installed itself in force. There are more than 400 foreign non-governmental organizations registered in Kosovo, each of which seems to have its own fleet of white jeeps.

Laughland encountered many members of this new global elite in the main hotel in Pristina, "discussing whether their next posting will be in Jakarta or Geneva, while upstairs seminars are held on the rights of the child in Cambodia and on gender equality in the Balkans." Outside, he noted "an army of stubbly young men in leather jackets and sunglasses hangs around on street corners," but:

> Of the Serbs, meanwhile, there is little trace. During the summer, Kfor and the United Nations turned a blind eye as all non-Albanians were systematically chased out of Kosovo, thereby flouting the very principle invoked to legitimise the Nato war in the first place. Whereas during the Nato bombing tens of thousands of Albanians were able to remain in Kosovo unmolested by the Serb police, any Serbs who have been foolish enough to venture out since Kfor entered the province have been beaten to death or shot in the street. In towns where previously tens of thousands of Serbs used to live, now not a single family remains. Their houses have been looted and burned. The specifically ethnic nature of these attacks is emphasised by the systematic bombing campaign which the Albanians have waged against Serb churches. Since June, some 80 churches, including some of the greatest jewels of mediaeval Christendom, have been desecrated or professionally dynamited.

Laughland's final remarks are enough to make any *Washington Post* editor's blood boil:

> Crossing the border on foot back into Serbia proper, I found myself on a dark and deserted country road. The nearest village was many miles away. Fortunately, I was discovered by a helpful policeman who gave me a lift and then drove into the village to find me a taxi. One had the strong impression of arriving back in civilisation.

In the meantime, on the other side of the civilizational divide, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright celebrated Ramadan with American Muslims. She held a lavish *iftar* dinner in the ornate Thomas Jefferson room at the State Department to mark the end of the Islamic holy month on December 21.

"U.S. foreign policy is conducted in your name," Mrs. Albright told about 60 guests of the American Muslim Council, co-host of the event, and she went on to criticize—what else?—the Russian action in Chechnya. "Killing the innocent does not defeat terror. It feeds terror," she said.

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Best of British Conservatism

by Derek Turner

"Hail, happy Britain! Highly favored isle,
And Heaven's peculiar care!"

—William Somerville

A Bastard's Tale
by Sir George Gardiner
London: Aurum Press; 280 pp., £18.99

The Abolition of Britain
by Peter Hitchens
London: Quartet Books; 351 pp., £15.00

Salisbury: Victorian Titan
by Andrew Roberts
London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson; 938 pp., £25.00

◆

British conservative circles are awash with books at the moment. Apart from the usual think-tank reports and surveys, we have seen recently John Major's and Norman Lamont's memoirs, John Redwood's *Death of Britain*, and the latest miscellany from *Daily Telegraph* columnist Michael Wharton (*Peter Simple*), to name several. Three books, however, are among the most interesting and useful of this post-May 1997 oeuvre.

A Bastard's Tale is the autobiography of Sir George Gardiner, former Conservative MP for Reigate and briefly the only MP ever for the late Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party. Sir George was Chairman of the influential backbench assemblage of MPs called the 92 Group, which is in many respects the arbiter of power within the Parliamentary Party. During his tenure as leader, the 92 Group pursued a Euroskeptical line which was often at odds—especially once John Major became prime minister—with that of the party hierarchy, culminating in the famous revolt against the Maastricht Treaty and Major's description of the rebel MPs as "bastards"

H. Ward Sterett

(hence the book's title).

Sir George has right-of-center opinions on most issues, notably Europe, capital punishment, and the family, although his views on immigration are unsound. This, however, is true of many Conservatives, who do not understand that conservatism, if it is anything, means the conservation of a particular people in a particular place. His political opinions, his position in the 92 Group, and his physical appearance (he was once described as "Dracula left out in the rain") have encouraged the growth of legends about him. "Were all the world a stage, [Gardiner] would be played by Vincent Price," former MP Julian Critchley has said.

Much of Sir George's book is consumed with minutiae about late-night conclaves in smoke-filled rooms or constituency meetings on the "rubber chicken circuit" and will therefore date quickly, but the author has included considerable detail concerning how the party machine works (or does not work). There are many interesting anecdotes, and stark insights into the vacuity of John Major. "John Major had no deep convictions and little conception of the kind of country he would like Britain to become. Leadership for him was essentially an exercise in manipulation to keep himself at the top of the greasy pole." Sir George was a political journalist and columnist whose journalistic experience is evident in his lucid and unpretentious style. Those who have a basic knowledge of the Conservative Party and are interested in the personalities involved will find *A Bastard's Tale* well worth reading.

Peter Hitchens, broadcaster and *Daily Express* columnist (also, ironically, the brother of Christopher Hitchens), has produced a well-written and thoughtful overview of cultural trends in his *Abolition of Britain*. British Tories, for the most part, still do not realize the importance of cultural politics, and their (often rather dreary) books reflect this. Hitchens' penetrating one begins to address this deficiency.

Hitchens starts by quoting Tony Blair's words in 1997: "I am a modern man. I am part of the rock and roll generation—the Beatles, color TV, that's the generation I come from." For Hitchens, this somehow encapsulates the difference between the old Britain, which ran the world's largest empire and defeated Nazi Germany, and the new "People's Britain," which could elect a ludicrous figure like Blair as its prime minister. Like many other conservative-minded people, he found the extraordinary scenes surrounding the funeral of Princess Diana curiously disgusting, signaling the end—or at least a nadir—of

Derek Turner is the editor of Right NOW!, *published in London.*

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British restraint, common sense, and dislike of exhibitionism, by contrast especially with the dignified funeral given Winston Churchill in 1965. One of the most effective parts of the book is the "transplantation" of a mourner from the gates of Kensington Palace in 1997 to the Britain of 1965, where this "time traveller" is confronted not just by lovable, cheeky Cockneys and polite shop assistants, but also by poor-quality food, dowdy clothes, and "rather low" standards of hygiene. Yet there is no doubt which period Hitchens prefers. The book is divided into 15 chapters, plus an introduction and conclusion, dealing respectively with emotionalism, history, class, patriotism, Anglicanism, television, satire, marriage and illegitimacy, the English language, the family, pornography, soap operas, family planning, liberal intellectuals, and the influence of America. Each is rich in elegiac observations, such as Hitchens' comments on historical awareness:

> Thirty or forty years ago, we might all have known the stories of Alfred and the cakes, of Canute and the waves, of Caractacus and Boadicea, Hereward the Wake and Thomas à Becket. The titles of the parables—the Sower, the Prodigal Son, the Talents—would have instantly conjured up a picture in the rich colors of a stained-glass window . . . Now these things are as meaningless to millions as the forgotten myths of Greece. We drive past ancient churches, Victorian town halls, abandoned grammar schools and guano-spattered statues, quite unaware of the forces that brought them into being, the struggles they commemorate or the sort of people who built them.

The list of topics, while demonstrating Hitchens' ambition with this book, also suggests, perhaps, an undue degree of pessimism. Like many conservative works, *The Abolition of Britain* may even tend to inculcate pessimism, although the author does remark that "it is not certain that the struggle is finished or that the modernizers have already won," and that the forthcoming referendum on the single currency represents an historical opportunity to reject the "liberal conformist" worldview. He advocates a patriotic alliance with those on the left who are concerned about nationhood and the decline in morality, although the details are sketchy—and how many on the left really care about the nation-state? Yet the experiment ought to be tried.

Confirmation of Hitchens' pessimistic conclusions might be found in a comparison of Prime Minister Blair and thrice-Prime Minister Lord Salisbury. The Beatles-and-color TV PM can only be contrasted unfavorably with the man who presided over the British Empire at the moment of its greatest extent, and whose wise stewardship ensured peace in Europe during decades of expansionist restiveness. (To be fair to Blair, most modern Tories also look bathetic when placed alongside this Victorian titan.)

Andrew Roberts, commissioned by the sixth Marquess of Salisbury to write the life of his great-grandfather, took pleasure in the task of rescuing his subject from undeserved obscurity. "I have an unpleasant suspicion," he says, "that, aged 36, I will never again find so congenial a subject." Roger Scruton, editor of the *Salisbury Review*, has said that the journal's title pays honor to an ideal prime minister who "never did anything," i.e., never passed any legislation. Joking aside, not only did Salisbury for the most part eschew legislative remedies, but his diplomatic labors were carried out exceedingly discreetly. Salisbury despised compliments, which he called "discreditable to the utterer and odious to the receiver," and discouraged personality cults of the sort which grew up around Disraeli and Gladstone. As the author notes sardonically, "There could never be a People's Robert . . . " It is probably for these reasons that Salisbury is neglected even by thoughtful Conservatives. Yet he wrote over two million words of trenchant political commentary and book reviews, displaying a profound knowledge of such varied non-political fields as German philosophy, science, and theology. Historian Robert Blake has called him "the most formidable intellectual figure that the Conservative Party has ever produced." How many could combine the office of prime minister with the presidency of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, or present a highly regarded critique of the theory of evolution to an audience made up of some of the greatest scientists of the time? Obviously, any man who could be described as "too Conservative for modern times . . . a man of a past age, [who] has no sympathy with life, the stir and growth of the present and no belief in the future" is worthy of study.

Roberts combines scholarship with caustic humor. He takes particular delight in remembering the verses of the jingoist Alfred Austin, including the masterful couplet from a poem attributed to him on the illness of the Prince of Wales: "Across the wires the electric message came: / He is no better, he is much the same." Also, he enjoys quoting Salisbury's famous red-inked *bons mots* and marginalia. "If Admiral Hornby is a cool-headed, fearless, sagacious man, he ought to bring an action for libel against his epistolary style," Salisbury commented on an 1878 letter. Touches like these, as well as the realization that one is sailing in little-known waters, make reading *Salisbury* an unmitigated pleasure. There may never be another PM quite like him, but while there are enough people interested in Lord Salisbury for a major publisher to bring out his biography, surely all cannot be lost. c

RECEIVED WISDOM

For Good and Evil: The Impact of Taxes on the Course of Civilization by Charles Adams (Madison Books; $29.95).

Maverick economic historian Charles Adams has produced a second edition of his acclaimed history of taxation. Tracing the course of this dreaded necessity from ancient Egypt to the present, Adams offers original and sometimes quirky insights into the impact of taxes. The American War Between the States, for example, turns out to have been fought more over tariffs than over slaves: "The tax issue in the Civil War was not a glamorous cause like slavery. It involved no high purpose on either side. The noble issues which both sides held up as the cause for their struggle remind one of the lofty purposes superpowers often profess to cover their imperialism. The point here is that the North did not go to war to free the slaves and the South did not secede because of a trigger-happy anti-slavery crusader in the White House."

Although he has praise for the intentions of reformers who have proposed a flat tax or a consumption tax, Adams is not sanguine about the immediate prospects for tax reform: "The current effort to reform the income tax by a few band-aid remedies has been tried so often as to be nothing other than a joke."

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Stylish Mendacity

by Paul Gottfried

Hitler's Pope:
The Secret History of Pius XII
by John Cornwell
New York: Viking;
430 pp., $29.95

◆

Awash in reviews of Cornwell's portrait of Pius XII, I felt surfeited by the book even before it arrived in the mail. To call this biography unflattering is meiosis. John Lukacs is right to say that, while Cornwell's production is being featured by the History Book of the Month Club, history itself is what Cornwell mercilessly clubs in his assault on Eugenio Pacelli, the papal nuncio to Germany who became Pope Pius XII.

Cornwell's intemperate attacks do not seem justified by the evidence cited. If Pius, as a well-wisher of Nazi tyranny and an antisemite who typified the Church's "habitual fear and distrust of Jews," really *was* "Hitler's Pope," Cornwell does not make these charges stick. It is one thing to claim that Pius did not go far enough in criticizing Nazism, when in his Christmas 1942 address he referred to the "hundreds of thousands [not identified specifically as Jews] who without any fault of their own, sometimes only by reason of their nationality or race, are marked down for death or gradual extinction." But these diplomatic tropes do not establish Pius's enthusiasm for the holocaust, anymore than his failure to take strong action when the Nazis entered Rome in October 1943 and imprisoned its Jews. What exactly *should* Pius have done at that time? Denunciations of Nazi antisemitism by Catholic bishops in Holland three years earlier had resulted in the extermination of Dutch Christians of Jewish descent, including a future saint, Edith Stein. What leverage (or military divisions) did the Pope have to induce the Nazis to become gentle and caring people?

It may be appropriate to ask, as one reviewer in *Osservatore Romano* has, how Pius—who had been viewed by Jewish leaders after the war as an heroic protector of Jewish refugees and who was the object of testimonials by Golda Meir, the chief rabbi of Rome, and the World Jewish Congress—could have so fooled the very people he had hoped to hurt? Why had no one after the war come up with the evidence which supposedly confirms Pius's Nazi and antisemitic convictions? The reason may be that Cornwell's accusations are mostly concocted. Until the victimological hysteria of the present age, moreover, no one would have taken such a work seriously. At least ten magazines, including *Atlantic Monthly* (which gave the biography high marks), feature a photo of Pius approaching the offices of the German head of state, the entrance flanked by grim-looking soldiers: an obvious attempt to create the impression of an obsequious visit to the German Führer by the papal nuncio. The visit actually took place in 1926, when Pius paid a courtesy call on the democratically elected president of the Weimar Republic.

The real sins of Pius XII, which Cornwell and his adulators find inexcusable, are two. The first charge, having been an "authoritarian" ecclesiastical head, is entirely ludicrous. Any pope, in particular a conservative one, becomes for Cornwell a usable stand-in for Pius IX, who was responsible for the proclamation of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council in 1870. Unfortunately, Pius XII, a painfully cautious and forever agonized pontiff, was a poor candidate to be Cornwell's ideal villain: far better for the author to have focused on the autocratic Pius XI, who in fact blasted the Nazis in his 1937 encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*, partly prepared by Pius XII. Though Pius XI loathed the communists (and backed the Nationalists in Spain), it would be hard to depict him as a friend of Hitler. The other polluting sin attributed to Pius was to have been hostile to communism and the political left—which allegedly drove him into the arms of the Axis.

If one is a white Westerner, the best way to protect oneself against the pro-Nazi smear is to have had communist or pro-communist associations. For example, both Bella Abzug and the French Communist Party supported the Nazi-Soviet Pact and spent almost two years portraying the Third Reich as no threat to the international working class. Neither has suffered much for this stand (which only isolated historians know about and even fewer dwell on). In comparison to Jewish liberal activist Abzug, Pius XII was an engaged anti-Nazi; unfortunately for his reputation, he also feared the left and enjoyed German culture. Pius XII has suffered a posthumous hatchet job not for being Hitler's Pope but because he was politically incorrect, undeserving of the proceedings that might have led to his beatification (which, in fact, were halted last October).

In a certain sense, this is fitting. Why should beatification be exempt from the leftist victimology to which every other political—or politicized—event is now subject? Last month, an American television program on the life of John Paul II scolded the Pope (or found someone who did so at length) for canonizing Polish priest and Nazi victim Maximilian Kolbe. Although Kolbe gave his life to save an intended Nazi victim, allowing himself to be executed in the place of a concentration camp inmate with a wife and children, this martyr did not quite measure up to media standards, having made unkind remarks in a Catholic monthly about Polish Jewish commercial practices. These angelic standards would not have been applied so rigorously had Kolbe been a Communist Party member or generic leftist. After all, liberal idol Bobby Kennedy frequently made scurrilous references to Jews and blacks without journalists bothering to mention this habit for 30 years after his death, and even then without hurt to his reputation (cf. *The Dark Side of Camelot* by Seymour Hersch). Pius XII, Cornwell reasons, must have been a Nazi because he held "undemocratic" views about Church polity and the threat communism poses to Christian societies. The Pope also fell short of the special standards applied to non-leftists in determining who is, and is not, an antisemite. Pius's unkind ethnic reference, during the short-lived Bavarian Soviet regime of 1919, to a Russian Jewish Marxist—a mildly insensitive comment probably easily surpassed every day of their lives by Harry Truman and members of the Kennedy clan—is brought forward to show that the future Pope had genocide on his mind.

Right now I have a hard time deciding which is the more reprehensible and

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hateful sample of victimological drivel, the teutonophobic fixations of Daniel Goldhagen in *Hitler's Willing Executioners* or Cornwell's collection of factoids. If Cornwell comes off slightly better, it is only because he writes like an educated Englishman. Even among mendacious scribblers, style should count for something.

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Shifting Ground

by Harold O.J. Brown

Finding Darwin's God: A Scientist's Search for Common Ground Between God and Evolution
by Kenneth R. Miller
New York: Cliff Street Books/Harper-Collins; 292 pp., $24.00

◆

Kenneth Miller, a professor of biology at Boston University, has produced a beautifully written work. His book is intended to refute every objection to the more or less universally accepted doctrine of evolution, to discredit its opponents, and to assert the compatibility of strict evolutionary doctrine with religion.

Ever since Darwin—and especially since the rise of Protestant fundamentalism early in this century—his opponents have launched attacks, some sophisticated but many of them heavy-handed, on the doctrine of evolution. During the last few years, a fresh series of literary assaults has been made, including books by a legal scholar and a biochemist, as well as political attacks, through the determination of school boards in Kansas and Kentucky that the teaching of naturalistic evolution in their schools will no longer be a requirement. In consequence, several promoters of evolutionary doctrine, Stephen J. Gould of Harvard among them, have mounted counterattacks to demonstrate that evolution (which for our purposes we shall call Darwinism, although evolutionary doctrine has subsequently progressed far beyond Charles Darwin's views) is true, irrefutable, and indeed impossible for serious thinkers to doubt; also, that religious people need have no fear of it. Despite its title, which might suggest an inquiry into Darwin's religious faith and theology, Miller's book is devoted primarily to the defense of the man's ideas—or rather those of his successors—which, Miller argues, are, scientifically speaking, absolutely sound. Starting with an anecdote about an early childhood encounter with what appears to have been the *Baltimore Catechism* with its straightforward and simple answer to the fundamental question of human existence ("Who made me?" "God made me"), Miller goes on to describe his early enthusiasm for the works of Milton, Dante, and other great literature, by comparison with which he found the *Origin of Species* plodding. It was not until, as a teaching assistant in college biology, he was confronted by a student waving a pamphlet entitled *Evolution—the LIE* that he became drawn into the defense of Darwinism.

Early in his book, Miller declares war on those evolutionists, such as G.C. Williams, who asserts that science has ruled out the existence of God, or at least of a benign one. "Is this indeed the case?" Miller asks. "Is it time to replace existing religions with a scientifically responsible, attractively sentimental, ethically driven Darwinism—a First Church of Charles the Naturalist? Does evolution really nullify all world views that depend on the spiritual? . . . And does it rigorously exclude belief in God?" He is definite in his response to his own question: "My answer, in each and every case, is a resounding *no*. I do not say this, as you will see, because evolution is *wrong*. Far from it. The reason, as I hope to show, is because evolution is *right*."

Miller begins his defense of religion with the effort to demonstrate that Darwinism, in its modern form, is scientific truth and can withstand all attacks; he then proceeds to deal with the attackers, chiefly Philip Johnson and Michael Behe. In dealing with Johnson—the author of two books challenging Darwinism, *Darwin on Trial* and *Reason in the Balance*—Miller points out "that the case he and his legal associates bring against evolution is not a scientific case at all, but a legal brief. The goal of his brief is to raise reasonable doubt . . . " In order to prove a theory wrong, is it necessary to offer a correct alternative? Johnson has such an alternative—design by an intelligent Creator God—but his stated intention is not to prove the theory of biblical creation but to expose the fallacies of evolution. Johnson, poor fellow, is not a scientist. "His claim of a punctuated equilibrium falls apart under close scrutiny, and his assertions that the fossil record does not support evolution is in error." Miller himself does not provide us with that close scrutiny. He merely asserts that Johnson is wrong.

Miller, a scientist rather than a lawyer or logician, argues, "If evolution is genuinely wrong, then we should not be able to find *any* examples of evolutionary change anywhere in the fossil record"—not noticing, apparently, that the existence of *some* examples of macro-evolutionary change, even if they are accepted (which not everyone is willing to do), does not prove the general theory of evolution: namely, that *all* present-day organisms came about through such change. And he does not acknowledge—although his position rather presupposes—the fact that the doctrine of evolution, even if it could explain *how* living beings came into existence, cannot deal with the question of purpose, of First Cause implying an intelligent Designer even more strongly, perhaps, than does the God of Genesis.

Miller devotes slightly more time to his fellow biological scientist Michael Behe, whose fundamental argument is that intelligent design is not merely possible but absolutely necessary. "Behe's argument, as summarized in his 1996 book, *Darwin's Black Box*, is that Darwinian evolution simply cannot account for the complexity of the living cell," that biological life is made up of organs far too complex to have developed naturally. Against Behe, a geneticist, Miller resorts to what is called the genetic fallacy in logic: "As I read Behe's book I began to get the impression that this seemingly new argument against natural selection had a familiar ring . . . At least for a while, many would fail to recognize just how old this argument really is." Because, that is, the argument against Darwin is old, we don't need to listen. Here Miller overlooks the fact that Darwin's own theory must necessarily be older than arguments directed specifically against it. Of course, Darwinism is being regularly updated and modified—but without meeting the basic objections to it, as both Johnson and Behe would argue.

Among Miller's arguments against intelligent design—and specifically against

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the theory (theistic evolution) that God Himself intervened in the evolutionary process to steer it and to speed it up—is his contention that, if God did so intervene, it would oblige Him to intervene in and to direct *everything* that occurs in the universe, and thus put an end to freedom, which Miller considers fundamental. Here is another case of the excluded mean: Why is it not possible for an intelligent Designer to design some things while allowing others to develop by chance?

Miller is obviously a benevolent man, one who does not wish to disillusion his students and readers or to destroy their faith. Unfortunately, the faith that he protects from Darwin seems a very pale substitute for orthodox religion. After quoting Darwin's last sentence in the *Origin of Species*, Miller concludes with these words: "What kind of a God do I believe in? The answer is in those words. I believe in Darwin's God."

Harold O.J. Brown is religion editor for Chronicles, *a professor of theology and philosophy at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina, and the editor of the* Religion & Society Report.

Have Armchair, Will Travel

by Bill Croke

A Passage to Juneau: A Sea and Its Meanings
by Jonathan Raban
New York: Pantheon; 435 pp., $26.50

◆

Travel writers are a diverse lot. The great ones—Evelyn Waugh, Somerset Maugham, Graham Greene—sought out the seedy outposts of colonialism, frequenting hotel bars peopled by jaded, witty expatriates. Others, such as Bruce Chatwin, who tramped through Patagonia and Afghanistan with only a rucksack, preferred roughing it. In *A Passage to Juneau: A Sea and Its Meanings*, Jonathan Raban (author of the 1996 National Book Critics Circle Award-winning *Bad Land*) has added a new twist to the genre: the armchair traveler who takes his armchair with him.

That armchair is aboard the *Penelope*, a 30-foot ketch of which Raban is a competent helmsman. She is stocked with good food, wine, and books (natural history, ethnography, nautical subjects) by the yard. The author's journey takes him up the wild Inside Passage from Seattle to Juneau, Alaska, a region replete with landmarks named Deception Pass, Desolation Sound, Cape Caution, and Blind Channel—places subject to quickly changing weather and dangerous tides and inhabited by rough merchant seamen, crusty fishermen, the indigenous Indians, and the often-despised summer tourists on large cruise ships. In fair weather, the area is one of placid waters, spectacular mountain scenery, and abundant wildlife. In foul, it is a cold, Dantesque maritime hell.

Jonathan Raban's tour guide is George Vancouver—Captain Van as he was known to his near-mutinous crew. One of the great mariners of his time and the namesake for the large Canadian city, Vancouver was the Passage's first in-depth explorer and cartographer, and his four-volume eponymous *Voyage: 1791-1795* is Mr. Raban's Bible. Vancouver serves at the same time as the writer's alter ego and his opposite, as Raban's romantic view of his surroundings (he liberally quotes the likes of Wordsworth, Shelley, and John Muir throughout his text) contrasts with Captain Van's: The latter's books are full of references to "sterile" mountains, whereas Raban delights in "hoary crags and crystal cascades."

Captain Van was a proto-Ahab who ruled his two ships—*Discovery* and *Chatham*—with an iron fist. The Melvillean analogy can be extended to his crew's malcontents, a group of young English aristocrats seeking adventure while expecting a wilderness version of "The Grand Tour." Vancouver would tolerate no loafing and literally applied the lash to his crew in times of storm and stress. (The surnames of some of these troublemakers—Puget, Baker, Rainier, *et al.*—now grace well-known landmarks in the Pacific Northwest.) This severity, coupled with his lineage—he was of Dutch extraction, though English-born—promoted bad feeling that was exacerbated by Vancouver's strict prohibition of libidinous traffic with the local Indians. Using his writings and maps, Raban meticulously traces the captain's route northward along the sublime coast of British Columbia.

Alaska is much on Raban's mind. Seeing the "Last Frontier" is the *raison d'être* of his maritime odyssey. Alaska's history is one of constantly trying to beat the odds. Booms, busts, hard work, and weather take their toll on the unwary and starry-eyed pilgrim. While fitting out his boat in Seattle, Raban employs John Munroe, much admired and respected as a true Alaska-hand, who describes life in the remote hamlet of Togiak during a boom in the highly competitive commercial herring industry: "It was wild. The s - - t was really flying. Incredible mass destruction. Rammings. Sinkings. Shootings. A midair collision, right over town. . . . Dead guys. A lot of dead guys. People you knew—friends—they'd drown, or get shot, or disappear. But it wasn't dull, like California." Raban adds: "In the dog days of peacetime, Alaska held out the promise [for young men] of all the noise and excitement of a major foreign war."

When Mr. Raban arrives in Ketchikan, he finds a hodgepodge of "pawnshops and tattoo parlors" and the Sunday morning streets littered with the detritus of a hard-drinking boreal Dodge City. In summer, thousands of seasonal cannery workers, commercial fishermen, loggers, and those camera-clicking tourists crowd the place. Ketchikan is hemmed in by the mountains and the sea, breathtaking beauty leavened by environmental "spoliation" in the form of clearcuts in the nearby Tongass National Forest, where the mountains appear "tonsured like monks." Since everything comes into Ketchikan from Seattle via plane or ship, Raban finds himself dropping $231 in a single trip to the local supermarket: "That was another measure of Alaska's condition as a client state of the Lower 48: a box of Cornflakes, or a stick of butter, was a luxury import. Almost the only locally manufactured goods I could find were six packs of beer at the neighboring liquor store."

Sailing into Juneau's gorge-like bay, Raban scans the scene for the governor's mansion, which he finds prosaic compared to the ever-present manifestations of Alaska's love 'em, hate 'em tourist industry: "The ships grandly belittled the town. None of Juneau's buildings could hold a candle to the many-storied, snow-white magnificence of the floating republics of Holland-America, Princess, Royal Caribbean." And so his thousand-mile voyage ends.

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Mr. Raban is overtaken in mid-trip by word from England of his father's serious illness and impending death, which causes him to quit the sea and make for London. Journey's end in Juneau brings him news of his wife's request for a divorce. These digressions (amounting to 50 pages), while certainly important to Jonathan Raban, are not so to the reader. Though if he sees his seaborne odyssey as a metaphor for a personal midlife crisis, at least it is one vividly rendered, with expansive vistas and the pungent smell of the sea.

Bill Croke writes from Cody, Wyoming.

The Mirage of Movies

by Jeffrey Meyers

Seventy Light Years:
A Life in the Movies
by Freddie Young, as told to Peter Busby
New York: Faber & Faber;
164 pp., $27.00

◆

The cinematographer, the director's collaborator and confidant, uses the lens, camera, and lighting equipment to make the fake look real and the real authentic. He creates the visual appearance and style of the film. Freddie Young (1902-98), combining stamina and discipline, was perhaps the greatest cinematographer of the century. The youngest son of a large and recently impoverished English family, he left school at 14 and began as a lab assistant in Gaumont Studios in London. He occasionally served as a stunt man and was injured while filming explosions. Wearing owlish spectacles that seemed to reflect the lens of his camera, he shot horse races and soccer matches. He worked on the first sound pictures in Britain, when noisy hand-cranked cameras had to be placed in soundproofed booths, and sometimes shot three movies at the same time. In his long career, he completed 161 feature films.

Young was a great artist, but he prided himself on being tough, even abrasive with his crew. He emphasized that "you mustn't let yourself be pushed around by these [studio] executives, no matter how big they are, if you want to protect your reputation as a cameraman." He worked with famous directors like George Cukor, John Huston, and John Ford. He quotes Ford—guarding the director's prerogative—saying: "I only shoot what I want to use, to stop the bastards recutting the film afterwards." Young helped train such future directors as Jack Cardiff and Nicholas Roeg. He won Oscars for filming David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia, Dr. Zhivago* (both partly filmed in Spain), and *Ryan's Daughter*. Though he worked with Lean on three major films, he has very little to say about his character.

This thin, well-illustrated memoir is charming, breezy, and anecdotal. But it's a great pity Young didn't start dictating his book before he reached his mid-90's, when his mental powers and memory had begun to fail. Some of his jokey anecdotes fall flat; others seem to have no point or are even absurd. The actor Walter Pidgeon, for example, living in great luxury, complained that President Roosevelt had "ruined" him, but Young does not explain the contradiction. When the Hungarian director of *Caesar and Cleopatra* asked Vivien Leigh "if she vill valk jus a lil bit slow," she meekly followed his orders, yet brashly told Young: "Yes, but you tell Mr. Pascal that I shall do exactly as I please." Young fatuously remarks of a colleague who had a brain hemorrhage that "when he returned to the studio he was a sick man."

Many of Young's descriptions are superficial. He calls the English producer Ivor Montagu "a terribly nice, gentle sort of chap" (in true Hollywood fashion, everyone is simply wonderful), and blandly observes that he "found the customs of Japan fascinating." But he doesn't say anything about the emotional dynamics of filming a love scene with Sarah Miles in *Ryan's Daughter*.

Young does tell several good stories that reveal the glamorous and adventurous aspects of filmmaking. Lean took his Rolls Royce wherever he was working, and Tyrone Power outdid him by transporting his yacht to Europe on an ocean liner. Filming Richard Brooks' *Lord Jim*—"a hotchpotch of every film you've ever seen: a bit of piracy, mysticism, love interest"—in the jungly ruins of Angkor Wat in Cambodia in 1964, Young experienced (as I did when visiting these crumbling monuments two years later) swarms of locusts that dived into his food and drink. Like Young, I sealed the crack under my hotel room door at night and climbed under the mosquito net. The locusts simply crawled through the drainpipe of the sink and flew above my head. Slashed by the ceiling fan, they formed a crusty carapace when I stepped barefoot onto the floor the next morning.

This memoir, with its many technical details, shows the evolution of camera work throughout this century and reveals Young's main (though undefined) theme: his ingenious solutions to many difficult cinematic problems. Throughout the down-to-earth book, he stresses trade secrets and the practical details of how illusion is created, rather than aesthetic questions. Young made the snow in *Dr. Zhivago* (insufficient even in the coldest part of Spain) from hundreds of tons of marble dust. He made the ice out of candle wax and formed the slippery patches with a layer of soap. He put rock salt on the actor's coats and shaving cream on their beards, and made their breath seem cold by having them exhale cigarette smoke. Young achieved a flattering halo effect around the face in a close-up "by stretching a piece of white gauze over the camera a few inches in front of the lens, then using a lighted cigarette to burn a hole in the centre of the gauze."

He shot aerial combat by hanging miniature Spitfires on invisible nylon cords and gave the actors the illusion of weightlessness on a moon made of plaster by having them bounce on trampolines while he filmed them in slow motion. Young blew up houses by rigging "up a wood and plaster set that is deliberately flimsy, with the timbers half sawn through. [He drilled] holes at strategic places, put dynamite in them, and wired all the charges with one switch beside the camera. When the switch is pulled the

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whole thing is blown apart, collapses and bursts into flames."

Freddie Young's two most challenging achievements were filming the storm in *Ryan's Daughter* and the mirage in *Lawrence of Arabia*. Instead of shooting the storm with fire hoses and wind machines, the crew filmed a real tempest on the rugged Irish coast. "We were all in wet suits," Young told Lean's biographer Kevin Brownlow (who preempted some material from Young's unpublished manuscript). "The camera was chained to a rock and it was as much as you could do to hold on to the tripod and crouch against the wind."

Suggesting the burning cauldron of the mirage shot, Young told Brownlow that, when filming *Lawrence of Arabia* in the Jordanian desert, "Light conditions were a constant surprise, and peculiar phenomena such as spirals of sand, called dust devils, would arise from the desert and, whirled by some heat currents of air, travel rapidly at us in a long sideways column, taking sunshades and other paraphernalia with them."

In his own book, Young explained how he managed to capture the illusion with a special lens: "A mirage in the desert is always seen in the distance, looking as though the sea is lying on top of the sand. With a telephoto lens you can film this in close-up, which enables the audience to see details of the heatwave and the blueness invisible to the naked eye." On the screen, you see "first the mirage, then on the horizon a shimmering dot of a figure. As he comes closer you get a distorted image of his camel trotting, it seems, through water, and finally a clear view of Omar Sharif [playing Sherif Ali] approaching the last few yards." The mirage not only dramatizes the appearance of Sherif Ali as Lawrence and his Bedouin guide rest at the alien watering hole, but the three-minute, almost-silent sequence leads to a violent confrontation and illustrates the fierce passions of the desert—perhaps the most stunning sequence in the history of cinema. Nowadays, Young regretfully observes, so many visual effects are done digitally in post-production that a great deal of creativity has been taken away from the cameraman.

Jeffrey Meyers, biographer of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Frost, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, will publish a life of Orwell with Norton next September.

Standing on the Star

(Montgomery 1996)

For Michael Hill

by James Everett Kibler

It takes presumption,
Some at least,
This standing where Jeff Davis stood
To lead new land along its way.
We stand today
And view Montgomery's
Puzzled modern plastic promenade
Of jagged tower
Pock-marked road,
Of jumble of confused façade
And engine cry alarm.
Where are her forest's trees?
And where clean rivers and her streams,
And where her fertile, life-sustaining rows?
A people in her crisis
Dart between
The rows of traffic
Streaming lethal unseen smoke,
To take defense behind an alien steel and glass
Hermetically encased.
A land drained bare
By her oppressor's wrong,
Put in its cage of iron,
Hands at bars.
No fountain at the base of avenue
Can issue forth the waters to revive—
Not in this landscape
Of the dispossessed.
And yet the star survives.
Jeff Davis knew what he was standing for,
And standing on.
In standing here, we know it too.
No five sharp-pointed pentagram
But six, symmetric, gleaming gold,
Worn smooth by pilgrim feet
And will be polished bright by mine
When bared of leather and machine-made sole.
The magic lies in proper pilgrim feet
And spirit of the soil beneath
To breathe of inspiration
In the pilgrim soul.
We free that spirit topped with stone.
A hard-paved street in asphalt
Never can inspire.
No jumble of façades
That know not who or whence they are
Can pass the muster of the years
And yield their grace to time.
The soil will wait as long as must
But will at last itself have way.
We stand upon the star,
In bondage view and do,
And with God's promise of delivery,
Our time we wait and pray.

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Letter From Turkey

by Jeffrey Meyers

Turkish Tally

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A few years ago, my wife and I set off to spend a sabbatical year in Spain, but thought we would go via Turkey. The idea started with a new Swiss "motoring" map that laid out the highways in firm red lines. We also wanted to go to the Aegean islands of Greece. We'd been to Greece many times before; and while we loved the islands in the Cyclades and the Sporades, we couldn't stand the tedious boat trips from Athens. The map, once more, encouraged us: Rhodes, Kos, and Lesbos were all very close to the Turkish coast. Surely there would be boats that would get us there in an hour.

We relished the thought of going off without reservations or a fixed itinerary. We had enough money for modest hotels, and we owned a trusty Volkswagen beetle. We would make our way from Northern Europe through Yugoslavia and Bulgaria to Istanbul, then drive across the wilds of Anatolia to Ankara, Erzurum, and the border with Iran. On the way back, we would turn south, through Kayseri in the middle of the country, and head for the Mediterranean and Aegean coasts. We could cross back and forth by boat to Rhodes and Lesbos—then drive back up to Istanbul, leave the car in the airport, and fly to Israel for ten days. Simple. But we forgot a few important things. We had a lot of luggage. The Turks and the Greeks hated each other. And I didn't read the small print on the map: "numbered main highways, without regard to their conditions."

Influenced by my visits to Greece, I thought of Turks with some apprehension. Their ferocious image was reinforced when I read *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. In Deraa, once part of the Ottoman Empire, T.E. Lawrence had been captured and raped by the brutal Turkish *bey*. I had taught in Korea in the 60's, and heard a story about the Turkish NATO troops. Everybody was preyed on by Korean thieves, whose brazen thefts included underground cable and telephone poles. American military bases, awash in television sets and electronic equipment, were easy targets. But the Turks had a way with thieves. They caught one, shoved a ramrod through one ear and out the other, and hung him between the gateposts. Then I saw *Midnight Express*, a movie about a naive young American doing drugs in Turkey, who was cast into a sadistic jail. Not exactly a promotional video.

In Istanbul, the West becomes East. After the grim totalitarian towns and villages of Bulgaria and the rolling farms of northern Greece, we plunged into the chaotic, squalid, crowded, noisy, dusty Asiatic city. Beggars sat, hawkers screamed, and porters toiled across the Galata bridge under incredible loads. Many people lived and slept in the streets. Turkey seemed a country under arms. Police were everywhere, holding the masses in check. To control political unrest, armed soldiers stood at every major intersection, yet they seemed more reassuring than threatening.

There's no pleasant street to walk on, even in the new part of the city. The old part has all the tourist sights: St. Sophia, the Blue Mosque, Topkapi, the New Palace, the museums, the covered bazaar, and the spice bazaar. For all the dust and noise outside, the mosques were cool and silent inside, resplendent with jeweled colors, the black and white calligraphy glowing on the walls. The best way to see Istanbul is from the water, and on a boat ride up the Bosporus, we admired the old houses crowding its banks. From close up, the domes, minarets, and hills were seedy and depressing; from a shimmering distance, they appeared exotically beautiful and recalled the splendor of old Byzantium.

We were also dazzled by the food in Istanbul. Despite all the Greek propaganda we'd been fed, along with the lukewarm stuffed tomatoes and shish kebab with chips, we were immediately won over to Turkish cooking. Not, perhaps, the land of *A Thousand and One Nights*, but hundreds of little dishes, like Islamic dim sum, that make a whole meal. And they definitely have a thousand and one ways with an eggplant. One restaurant menu offered *Imam Bayeldi*, "The son of the priest of the mosque fainted"—because the dish was so good. We ate "split tummy egg plant" but turned down "brain fried in lamb's grease." In humbler establishments, it was soothing to be called *Effendi* (master) as I paid the bill.

Back on the road, from Istanbul to Ankara, I was reminded of Turkey's military readiness and strategic situation. Huge army camps, their white pointed tents stretching across the dun landscape, looked like desert battle scenes in World War I. Three hundred miles to the east, Ankara, the capital, was paradoxically more European than Istanbul. The new part of the city—founded by Kemal Atatürk in the 1920's and laid out along wide, straight boulevards—had neo-fascist public architecture. Easily seen in a day, the city had little color or interest, apart from tasteful and sophisticated Hittite archeology and national art museums.

In Turkey, you can always see the layers of the past in the present. In the Citadel, the core of the oldest part of Ankara, the people live as they did a century ago. A small boy picked us up and led us through the dingy warrens (for once, we really needed a guide) to the high ramparts and a view of the drab town. When I offered him a tip, he went into the routine so familiar to us from northern India and Morocco. He disdainfully refused it and demanded more, stomping off in a dramatic display of wounded dignity. When we walked away, he chased after us and took it eagerly. Upstairs, in the ladies' section of the ancient Ashlahane mosque, the guide showed me the staircase to the minaret. Though it was narrow, dark, and rough to my shoeless feet, I was tempted to use my heathen voice to call the faithful to prayer at the wrong time. As I painfully climbed and climbed, a bird suddenly flew out of the dark recesses and gave me a real fright, and I retreated downstairs.

We arranged to meet Mehmet, a Princeton-educated physicist at the Middle Eastern Technical University and a friend of a friend. He couldn't find our hotel and arrived an hour late. He told me about the recent shootout at the university, really an abortive *coup d'état*. Three hundred students and a few faculty were sent to jail (which we'd seen from the Citadel), some of them charged with treason, a capital crime. Between the army and the fundamentalists, Turkish

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professors and intellectuals have to tread carefully. In a smart restaurant—with a French-speaking maître d', tuxedoed waiters, and flowers on the table—we had a five-course lunch for a few dollars. Once more the food and the service calmed our worries.

Several people had told us that the main west-east road through Turkey was well-paved, and much better than the northern road along the Black Sea. We left at dawn, partly to steal a march on the heat. We also wanted to avoid a persistent beggar who'd been following us around for days and wiping the car windows with a smeary rag. The street was blessedly empty, the air still cold. I started the car, and Abdul, as if wired to the ignition, let out a muffled scream and emerged from underneath to demand a final tip.

We made excellent time until Sivas, the next big town after Ankara. Private cars had now virtually disappeared, and the road was eerily empty, except for the occasional truck or bus belching diesel fumes into the desert air. There seemed to be enough gas stations, but there was bad news as soon as I got low and had to stop. *Yok*, they said at the first one, and *yok* was repeated in the next three—Turkish by the direct method. Finally, I could go no farther. At 9:15 in the morning, the gas delivery truck was expected at 10:00, at 10:30 it was due at 12:30, and I pictured us stranded overnight in the wilderness. A passing Turk returning from work in Germany, in a Mercedes adorned with dangling knickknacks, urged me in German to be patient. Finally, at 11:30, the local police took an interest and offered to sell me some of their own supply, and we set off eastward again. At the next service station, I figured out there was a delivery drivers' strike and that gas would be hard to find.

After Sivas, the paved surface ended, and the road got very bad: first rough, then potholes and dirt, and finally a washboard with deep ruts. Sometimes I had to drive through a foot of water. This continued for 500 miles, almost to the Iranian border. So much for "motoring." When this "good" road was abruptly barricaded, we were forced to detour, could rarely go faster than 30 miles an hour, and were blinded by dust. All this jolting did not agree with the electrical system, and the car stopped dead just outside a town with the romantic-sounding name of Zara. We sat in stunned silence as the village idiot came over to stare at us—no doubt the most interesting thing that had happened to him for a long time.

A truck stopped almost immediately. The driver tried and failed to fix our car, then drove us into town to find a mechanic. We took cups of thick, sweet Turkish coffee in the café opposite the workshop, as the old men clacked their beads and dogs and chickens scavenged around our feet. The usual returned *Gästarbeiter* chatted sympathetically with us as he sat at the next table, happy to be back in this dusty middle-of-nowhere hometown. Though he made the repair, the mechanic swiped my screwdriver, as I discovered when the door handle fell off. The next day, about 250 miles later, the car once more came to an abrupt halt. This time, an American oil man from Kuwait, driving a van in the opposite direction, stopped to help. One by one, his nine kids climbed out and stood around us in a circle. Immensely organized and resourceful, he had exact information about the roads, three tool kits, cold milk, and Chiclets. One of his teenagers fixed the car with aplomb. The art of traveling, it seemed, was gracefully getting out of difficult situations.

The scenery in eastern Turkey was quite spectacular. High, rust-colored, Arizona-like mountains in a semi-desert alternated with carefully nurtured wheat fields. Clusters of smooth, square mud houses sat behind curvy mud walls (as in the Sahara), an occasional camel strolled by, and great herds of Angora sheep massed together to resemble one woolly mammoth. On the roadside, we passed a traffic fatality—a long dead cow with bony skull and bloated body, about to burst. The country women wore *yashmaks* and bright colors. Shepherds begged for cigarettes with an appealing pantomime and, disappointed and with nothing better to do, hurled stones at us.

Erzincan, about 475 miles east of Ankara, had a good hotel in a fine mountain setting. We chatted with a few well-off Iranians, who openly scorned the Turks. Peasants or no, these eastern Turks served us another masterly meal. We had an amazingly speedy waiter who yelled out the orders to the kitchen, literally ran with the food, joked with the customers, and seized the plates from the table as soon as you took the last spoonful. I had to grip my plate with one hand while I ate the last of the sauce. Suddenly all the electric lights went out, replaced in a minute by a single oil lamp. In a town where there wasn't much to do and people went to sleep with the chickens, a large crowd gathered outside, pressing their faces against the glass, to stare at the foreigners groping for their food.

T.E. Lawrence helped the Russians take Erzurum, the last major city on the road to Iran. The city fell in 1915 and looked as if no one had picked it up since then. We visited the crumbling ruins of a 13th-century university and saw a few ancient mosques. Once a great city, like Trebizond on the north coast, Erzurum was now a dusty dump. The next day, the last leg of our trip to the border, we found no restaurants at all, so for lunch we bought a delicious, hot crusty loaf—the only food we could find—and devoured it like Siberian prisoners.

After Erzurum, the road got worse than ever. Straggling bands of road workers picked at the surface. We crawled along and saw an arrogant Iranian meet his doom. He drove at high speed through a group of Turkish workers, forcing them to leap off the road, but plowed into a huge, invisible hole. As oil poured from underneath his car, the workers—angry and armed with picks—advanced menacingly. Near the border—in Kurdish territory north of Lake Van—Russia, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq come together within about 30 miles. Noah's Mount Ararat appeared, snowcapped and clouded over, and, quite appropriately, it began to rain.

We were tempted to take a more scenic route back to Sivas, either along the Black Sea or even around Lake Van, but the roads, so promising on the map, would surely be even worse than the one we were on. In a town near the border, we stayed in a pleasant hotel, run by a man who had worked in England. His pretty young English wife, homesick and depressed, buttons missing on her soiled dress, sat with us in the patio. She flushed angrily as her husband chattered enthusiastically about one tourist sight we had apparently missed—a public hanging that had taken place in the main square that morning. The dead man, a drug smuggler, had killed a border guard. He'd been brought back and executed where the victim's relatives could see that justice had been done. Later, the innkeeper appealed to my wife: Could she possibly talk to his wife about having a baby? His family wanted to know why she wasn't pregnant. She told us that children would merely increase her Islamic bondage.

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On the return trip, we arrived in Erzincan totally exhausted and fell asleep before dinner, too tired to eat in the restaurant with the speedy waiter. After lunch in a dubious place the next day, I was stricken with nausea and diarrhea. We finally reached Göreme, southeast of Ankara, in the afternoon. Half dead, I went to sleep for the rest of the day. When I miraculously recovered, we explored the volcanic landscape of ancient Cappodocia, where the early Christians hid in underground caves. The most extensive settlement, set in a harsh and freakish landscape, Göreme had many chapels with early Byzantine frescoes. Most of them had been defaced by Muslim fanatics who scored out the faces and bodies of the Christian saints. We stayed in the central Anatolian town of Urgup, the first attractive place we'd seen, where people lived inside the demented rock and cave formations. At Anamur, on the Mediterranean coast, we came across a huge and well-preserved third-century Phoenecian castle, rebuilt nine times through the centuries, most recently by the Ottomans. Turkey was incredibly rich in unexpected ruins.

There was a good road from Urgup to the coast, which began at St. Paul's Tarsus, and from there to Alanya the drive was vertiginous. But it was a thrill, after so many dusty miles, to see the Mediterranean at last. We saw scores of miles of deserted beach and magnificently colored water (cobalt shading into sapphire) as we wound through the sweet-smelling pine forests and curvy mountain passes high above the sea, like the California coast near Big Sur.

Our next hotel, two miles from Alanya, had a superb setting: high mountains behind, long empty beach below, and a river that flowed down from the hills. The ruins of a once-great fortress surrounded the town and offered a fine view. The harbor had a Greek atmosphere, with some good restaurants at the water's edge. But the heat, even in the shade, was intense. I nearly got sunstroke playing tennis with an elderly—though able—Turk, and my racquet slipped from my sopping hand and split on the ground. I threw it in the trash can, and a little boy immediately retrieved it.

Pamukkale, in western Anatolia, was the ancient Hieropolis, a Roman thermal spa and pleasure dome. We approached it by driving up a steep mountain that overlooked a vast plateau. The hotels, equipped with huge hot-spring swimming pools, were perched on the crest of a mountain, with an impressive view of the weird rock formations and pools caused by underground springs. We even had our own miniature pool outside our room. At dinner, I spoke Spanish to an Argentine diplomat stationed, unenthusiastically, in Ankara.

The whole place was pleasant, quiet, relatively empty, and seemed restful. At dusk on the second afternoon, we were walking along a dirt road and looking at the ruins. A car came up fast behind us, blasting his horn to force us and a few other stragglers off the road. I was furious, and as the car passed I pounded the top with my fist, New York-style. The car stopped and the driver, a middle-aged Turk with his womenfolk, screamed at me. I yelled back, and he drove off. I took my wife's elbow and steered her back toward the town, but the driver stopped again, noticed the dent I'd made, quickly backed up, and leapt out in a fury. Casually examining the damage, I leaned inside, tried to push out the dent, and managed to tear the upholstery in the process. By now apoplectic, the Turk summoned up his English and threatened: "I take you to justice!" My wife muttered that I didn't know my own strength. We went back to the hotel, where a policeman came to summon me to the barracks. Here it comes, we said, the interview with the Turkish *bey*. *Midnight Express* at the very least.

But the corporal in charge was a mild type, and the only punishment was watching the policemen struggle through an hour of painstaking, semiliterate writing (one got tired and had to be relieved) to take the Turk's deposition. Asked to surrender my passport, I got it from my hotel and came back to give my version of the story. In combat boots and helmet (dented, like the car), the policeman, appropriately named Attila, licked his pencil and stuck out his tongue with the effort of writing. I apologized to the Turk, gave Attila my gray cardboard international driver's license instead of my passport, and he solemnly accepted it. We solved the problem by leaving town before dawn the next morning.

It was now time to put the Greek island plan into action. We drove through the mountains to Marmaris, on the Aegean coast, where, we'd been told, the boat to Rhodes left in the evening, cost ten dollars, and took no cars. In fact, it left in the afternoon, cost five dollars, and carried cars. We had to buy the boat tickets, get a customs guarantee from a travel agency for leaving the car behind (a racket cooked up by the customs agents, who split the fees), go to the customs office and to the police, and then check our luggage at a hotel. The Turks, lethargic and inefficient, watched bemusedly as I raced about frantically.

After a few days on Rhodes, we sailed on to Kos for a week, and (though we'd been told there was no boat from there to Turkey) took a short boat ride to Bodrum, on the southwest coast. The bus connections back to the car were poor, so we hitchhiked. After 15 minutes, the first car on the road, driven by a Belgian traveling alone to Marmaris, stopped to pick us up. A Flemish nationalist, he refused to speak French, so we chatted amiably in English and rambled along the steep mountain roads.

The next morning we saw Ephesus, the most extensive Greek ruin in the Aegean, an entire town with two long marble streets and impressive remains of temples, libraries, houses, tombs, a theater—even a brothel. The museum had a famous bronze, the Boy on a Dolphin, and a male terra-cotta figure with an enormous member (a great favorite on the postcard rack).

Izmir (Smyrna), an attractive port, looks like Genoa or Haifa. We walked through the squalid back streets to the *Agora* (Greek marketplace), saw the modern Efes hotel with its bar below the transparent swimming pool (liquid watching liquid), and strolled along the seafront on the famous quay that Hemingway described during the Greco-Turkish war of 1921. When the Greeks left Smyrna, he said, "they had all their baggage animals they couldn't take off with them so they just broke their forelegs and dumped them into the shallow water."

We were told in Izmir that a Turkish boat sailed daily at 2:00 P.M. from Ayvalik to the Greek island of Lesbos. In Ayvalik, the tourist office confirmed this and directed us to the shipping agent, who told us that the boat, in fact, left at 3:30. (It was then four o'clock, and we could have made it had we known.) Because of a recent bank robbery and murder, he explained through his harelip, we had to notify the police nine hours before our departure, which meant by five that evening since he did not open until eight the next day. The fare was high, he said, because the ship was new and went very fast. He claimed that there were no bus-

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es in Lesbos and urged us to take our car to get across the island. All this seemed wildly improbable.

We rushed off, once again, to find a hotel to keep the luggage and get advice about taking the car. I asked for a room at a family-style pension inhabited solely by middle-class Turks. They said they were absolutely full, then kept us from leaving, rushed downstairs, and returned with a key. We took the dingy room, laboriously explained about the luggage, and finally agreed on a price.

We took a swim and sat around having a beer as the family scene suddenly turned to horror. A boy of about ten decided to jump from the balcony into the pool and landed instead on the concrete rim. His parents screamed, tried to lift him up on his possibly broken legs, dragged him around, patted his face, and dabbed his bruises with iodine. To add to the chaos, I shattered my beer glass. We tried to phone the shipping office to say we would be sailing the next day; the call, a mile away, took half an hour to come through. In the evening, we went to a shop that advertised foreign newspapers but in fact had only Turkish ones, and bought some cunningly disguised but rotten peaches.

We were reading in bed the next morning at 8:30 when there was a loud knock and some incomprehensible words in Turkish. When I finally opened the door, the hotel clerk informed me that the boat was leaving at 9 A.M. We frantically packed, stored the luggage, rushed down to the office, bought round-trip tickets (for which the agent tried to overcharge me), and raced to the dock. There we found a grimy crew servicing a wretched Greek boat. I asked when we would leave; they replied at ten or later since we were the only passengers. They swore the boat sailed back to Turkey every day, clearly a lie. I was furious. We'd bought round-trip tickets for a filthy, even dangerous boat, which might never bring us back to Turkey.

We raced back to the ticket office and explained, in German, to the Turkish agent that we preferred to wait for that fast, new Turkish boat that sailed at 3:30. To our amazement, he confessed that there was no such boat either today or tomorrow (yesterday he'd tried to sell us tickets for it), and no boat from the neighboring port of Dikili. I angrily demanded a refund, and he promptly returned our money. What now? The island was so near, yet so far. He produced a long passenger list, with many English names on it. These people, he assured us, would soon arrive. It was the wretched Greek boat or nothing, he said, and it was leaving right away. Encouraged and eager to be off, we repurchased the tickets and went back to the dock. Still no passengers. We went quickly through the police and customs, and hesitantly stepped on board. After a brief delay, we cast off—ourselves the only passengers.

A week later, we sailed back from Lesbos to Ayvalik, had the usual delay at customs, retrieved our car, and returned to the hotel to swim and sleep. Next morning, the winding coast road led us to the ruins of ancient Troy. The plains of Homer's Ilium are still windy, and the site magnificent. But most of the loot was carried off to Berlin long ago, and the ruins and museum were disappointing. Just beyond Troy, at the Dardenelles, a deep blue strait of water between two peninsulas, the fierce Turks defeated the British in March 1915. We waited in a long line of cars for the ferry to cross the straits. At the last moment, a huge Turkish Mercedes drove past the waiting line of cars, up the ramp and through a narrow passage, barely missing another car and the ticket taker. Despite the outraged cries of the other drivers, the cop in charge shrugged his shoulders and let the Mercedes go ahead of everyone else.

In the late afternoon, we reached Istanbul and went to the airport to find out how to leave the car at customs before flying to Israel. The place was so small and squalid that at first we didn't realize that it was *the* international airport. After searching for 20 minutes, we found the customs shed—closed. The tourist information desk directed us to the airport hotel, which refused to store the luggage.

The nearby Flora hotel, new and unlisted at the tourist office, agreed to store the luggage without charge, though they had no room for us. The owner asked us to bring her some coffee and tea back from Israel, and we agreed. She then said she might have a room after all if two American girls would share a room with a third who'd just arrived. We drove down to the beach and found the girls, who agreed to share. At the hotel, we were served the only bad meal we had in Turkey, at double the normal price. We then discovered that our room, rented for an extra half-day, would not be ready until 9 P.M. Insects and noise kept us awake all night. As we left the next morning, the owner, no longer feeling generous, told us we had to pay to store the luggage. Forget the coffee and tea from Israel.

Leaving a car at the customs in Istanbul was not so easy as it had been at sleepy ports like Marmaris and Ayvalik. At 8:45 A.M., we went to the huge airport customs shed, which contained not only cars but mountains of radios, tape recorders, televisions, and suitcases. The department head arrived at nine and sent us upstairs to the office of the chief of customs to fill out a form. The typist directed us to the female chief, who sent us back to the typist. Using one finger, he typed out the form, taking five full minutes for my name alone. We returned to the chiefess, caught her powdering her nose, showed her our passports and plane tickets, got her signature, and returned to the customs shed with the paper. A boy showed us where to park the car. In the shed, we got another form, filled out in triplicate with the car's license plate, motor, and serial numbers. I completed this form, went outside with the customs scribe, and showed him the car. We then took all the papers to a third office, packed with protesting Turks.

We kept repeating that our plane left in half an hour and we had to hurry. Finally, the third chief checked the forms against my passport and registration and said he had to have another look at the car. On the way, he stopped to involve himself in a wrangle over a misplaced radio. Feeling more and more trapped in an unending bureaucratic labyrinth, we desperately begged him to speed up. When he'd seen the car, we returned to his office, and, after scrutinizing several pages of Turkish stamps in my passport, he stamped the forms a few more times. (To complicate matters, I'd brought in another car on a previous trip, and this summer I'd entered Turkey four different times. We could hardly blame him for wondering what we were up to, and we began to wonder ourselves. Who planned this ridiculous trip, after all?) After we'd left his office, he ran after us, and we had to go back again. He wrote something in pencil in my passport, already quite full of unintelligible Turkish scrawls concerning the car, our luggage, and various entrances and exits. Back in the first office, we had the forms surveyed and stamped again, surrendered the car keys, and got one page of the triplicate. All this took two painful hours. I now understand the word "Byzantine" and why the Ottoman Empire collapsed.

In the end, the Turks were not as fero-

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cious as we feared. The waiters served excellent food, the customs officials cooperated in their laborious fashion, the truck driver stopped to help, the mechanic fixed our Volkswagen. One policeman gave us gas, another allowed me to escape after bashing a car. In a bizarre sort of way, our tensions and fears enhanced our travels. The bad moments were more vivid and memorable than the pleasant ones.

Jeffrey Meyers, biographer of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Frost, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, will publish a life of Orwell with Norton next September.

Letter From Venice

by Andrei Navrozov

Living Souls

◆

Last spring, in one of my early letters from Venice, I promised that I would write in greater detail about Baron F—, who liberated me from Florentine bondage by letting me the *attico* at Corte Tron, with its lifesaving terrace looking over the courtyard of the Palazzo Volpi and beyond, to the motionless cranes over the ruined Fenice. Almost a year has passed, and we are still fast friends; last week I improvised a dish, along the general lines of Louisiana gumbo, with some mallards he had shot on a remote islet in the lagoon; moreover, Michael Palin has now exposed him as a public figure in a television series about Hemingway. In short, in print as in life, I can call him by his Christian name.

It is quite the first time, incidentally, that this business of calling a person by his given name has any significance in my life, and I want to put that new sensibility in a broader context. The other night, I was talking to a young woman about a dinner party in Porto Ercole we had both attended in the summer, where she and her friend the hostess were the only Italians. The other guests, with a whole pashmina of marriageable girls among them, belonged to the broad, fast, First World that is New York, Paris, and the new London. Ordinarily, in my former social hypostasis, I would have remembered with perfect clarity who they all were, especially the girls, by name and surname, stated occupation, last known address, and mobile phone number, as well as whose jokes they laughed at, what shoes they wore, whom they were likely to marry in the end, and whether it would be worth the trouble to get invited to the wedding. This time, nothing. A sociopath's blank.

I realized just how much I had been spoiled by Venice in the intervening period, by Venice where the person with whom one is speaking is by definition a public figure, a permanent feature of the civic landscape, who has been here, perhaps in the form of his ancestors yet in this very armchair opposite, for 200, 800, 1,200 years. One's awareness of one's interlocutor, in such circumstances, matures gradually, progressing in small increments from the superficial and ritualized to the covert and coveted, and the privilege of addressing a person by his Christian name comes with the social territory that is painstakingly, but above all slowly, explored. This habit of social slowness, which is really a kind of wary sloth, is in vivid contrast with the manners of the First World and even of the Second, which in Italy would include Milan and to some extent the new Berlusconi-Murdoch, television-executive, wheel-of-fortune Rome.

There, in those newer, more intoxicating, less *maigre* worlds, the very firmament is in ferment, with human particles borne by diverse currents appearing and disappearing from view like snowflakes in a storm, with the effect that your interlocutor at a dinner party—all the more so if she is a pretty girl looking over your shoulder in no fewer than three directions at once—must be apprehended, appraised, fixed, and charmed all of an instant, whereupon the trauma of transience, dislocation, and accident is momentarily allayed and social life reacquires a semblance of meaning. Quickness, rapidity, rapacity are the jabs of the anesthetic that makes it all possible there, just as reticence, or perhaps dignity, is what you have to inject yourself with in Venice "if you want to have a good time."

It is interesting that the bit of hackwork aired on the BBC made the same point, albeit in a somewhat more politically tremulous key. The presenter noted Alberto's manifest "lack of urgency," and even murmured that "the word languid could have been coined" for him. "I ask what I should call him," Palin went on, "should it be Signor Franchetti, or perhaps Alberto? He purses his lips gently, as if acknowledging some distant, unspecific pain.

"'Perhaps *Barone*?' he suggests."

Alberto may not be Venice, but he is as close to it as you can get without building a bridge of fine Istria stone between your pancreas and your liver. He is something more than a good old boy, he is an archetype, one of a tiny handful of eminent Venetians who are to their nation what Gogol's "old world landowners" were to the Russia of his day. The author of *Dead Souls* never finished his "poem," which he had envisioned as a variation on Dante—only the part corresponding to the *Inferno* survives, and half of the *Purgatorio*—and thus the modern chronicler of Venice can plunge directly into the sort of book that might have been Gogol's *Paradiso*, without at any time feeling that he is treading on hallowed ground. And, insofar as what he aims to capture are the living souls of Venice, he must begin with Alberto.

As our landlord and neighbor, Alberto used to arrive on the terrace with a mess of dinner invitations for us in his pockets, and naturally we always wanted to accept all of them. A truly social foreigner in London would consider himself an outcast, perhaps a prisoner, if all of a sudden he had to limit himself to 300 dinner parties a year. Alberto would clear his throat, adjust a loose vine, fiddle with the ashtray. "No, but you know, you are going too fast. You cannot be so fast in Venice. You will burn out. You must be very careful. Why not have drinks with the M— on Tuesday, and then perhaps we can dine with G— on Friday, which will be very nice for you because they have a pleasant garden. But tomorrow I would like to suggest that you stay at home, and do nothing. No . . . thing at all. You will see, it would be much better."

"Can we go somewhere with your boat?"

"I do not think we should this week, no. No, we had better not. There is a terrible virus going round, you see. It is in the newspaper. I know many people who have it already."

Palin approached him to be the guide to Hemingway's haunts in Venice despite the fact that, when the American writer came here and was befriended by his family, Alberto was ten. But what I find so remarkable is how the BBC's Virgil, or rather my Beatrice, gradually up-

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stages the subject of that meandering documentary: The Man of Action, The Devil-May-Care Lover, The Celebrated Author, and Worst Shot-Up Man in the U.S. seems to shrivel up and recede into the background of modern history as The Languid Nobleman, The Man in the Moth-Holed Khaki Sweater, The Proprietor of the Palazzo Tron Who Never Replaces the Blown Lightbulb in the Hall and Drives a Boat the Size of a Child's Shoe emerges as a far more interesting and genuinely literary personage.

The famous boat (commercial value: none, not even with a fresh coat of paint; value of the engine, if the thing ever starts: $50) sank the other night, in mysterious circumstances. Alberto telephoned with the horrible news. Apparently, he had left it on the Grand Canal, tied to one of the posts outside his door.

"What happened?"

"I cannot think. Certainly I had not moored her too fast, so it was not the tide that did it." His voice is ashen. "I think perhaps the fire brigade passed and sideswiped her."

"So what are you going to do now?"

"I went into the canal with a rope at low tide last night, to look for what was there."

"How? In your trousers?" I obviously don't know what else to say. Trousers? It was five degrees centigrade on the Sunday of the Madonna of the *Salute*, and a driving wind from the north called *bora* was thrusting wet snow over Venice and the lagoon.

"No, I had taken off my trousers. I managed to pull up the motor, and you know, it started on the first try. But the boat, no. I am afraid that is now completely lost. When the motor started at five o'clock this morning, I just smoked a cigarette and went to bed."

I suggest that the protagonist of the dialogue, the same man who would advise us to stay indoors last spring for fear of viral infection and nervous exhaustion, has been using a drug all his life—the tranquilizer called human dignity—to keep the world at bay. This is evident from his comportment in the face of loss, something with which all the great families of Venice are familiar. Alberto's have long lost the Palazzo Cavalli-Franchetti, built in the mid-1400's and occupied first by the Condotierre Cavalli, then by the Counts Pepoli, who established there the famous music academy of the *Rinovati*, then by Archduke Frederick of Austria, and finally by Alberto's great-grandfather, the noted composer Alberto Franchetti. And they have lost their other, even more splendid seat, the Ca' d'Oro, "perhaps the most famous house of the Grand Canal," according to the Eleodori *Palaces and Families*, "to be compared only to the Palazzo Ducale for the richness of its decorations," which was eventually bequeathed to Venice together with its important collection of paintings.

And now the boat. Now I ask you, is there anything in Hemingway's life and work which even comes close to this as a test of character?

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

Letter From Texas

by William Murchison

Up in Smoke?

◆

The Texas Aggies—well, let's just say few other student bodies resemble them in unified outlook or devotion to tradition. That may well change. The hammer of conformity, of homogenization, has been heard banging on the Aggies' door since the bonfire debacle.

The debacle was bad enough: a dozen Aggies killed in the collapse of the spirit-building bonfire. Worse, this non-Aggie submits, would be a shamefaced retreat by the Aggies from their traditions, from their singular way of presenting themselves to the world. There are, nonetheless, those who want them to, and I predict their voices will rise ever more insistently.

To tell the truth, A&M even now isn't what it used to be. It once was the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, founded in 1876 (a great-great-grandfather of mine was the first president); a haven for farm boys with ambition and yet practical aspirations. You went to Aggieland—most likely from a small town or the farm—to become a veterinarian or an engineer, emerging with a good degree.

While at A&M—which in the old days was all-male—you belonged to the Corps of Cadets, a Reserve Officer Training Corps program that amply supplied the U.S. Army with officers. You wore uniforms all the time: boots and sabers by the senior year. You spoke a particular lingo. An Aggie friend of mine, when I was visiting as a University of Texas debater, showed me around. Some of the fellowship and rah-rah spirit might seem forced, but it did knit together a diversity of folk.

At football games, the Aggies stood, and still stand, throughout. Whenever the team scored, they kissed their dates. They sang *The Spirit of Aggieland*: "We are the Aggies, the Aggies are we. True to each other as Aggies can be."

This was the old A&M; not to be confused with the extinct. A&M went co-ed in the early 60's and changed its name to Texas A&M University (finessing the question of what "A" and "M" stand for). It has achieved national stature, educationally. The economics faculty is fiercely free market. (Phil Gramm once taught there.) The George Bush presidential library is housed on the campus. Students are generally conservative. There are sororities and fraternities now. Perhaps predictably, considering what America has latterly become, only about 2,000 Aggies (out of 40,000-plus) belong to the Corps. Still, A&M accords Aggie traditions, centered on the Corps, a becoming kind of priority.

Among those traditions: a 55-foot-high bonfire to fire up spirit before the annual Thanksgiving game with archrival Texas. It was this bonfire pile that collapsed a few days before the game, plunging the state into sympathetic gloom—and casting doubt on such an alpha-male tradition, with its elements of organized work, hierarchically directed; fraternal bonding; and exuberant celebration. Reports of drunkenness and bad engineering are seeping into the public prints.

Will they (whoever "they" may be: editorial writers, professors, female legislators, do-gooders) eventually come down on the Aggies, directing that the bonfire (called "Bonfire" by the Ags) be made safe and salubrious? Perhaps a 20-foot-high bonfire: How would that be? Or maybe professionals will take it over, ruining the participatory nature of the event.

It all seems a small thing. But you never know about small things. They sometimes get bigger than anyone suspects. Destruction of the bonfire tradition could usher in a reassessment of the contradictory faces of modern Texas A&M: Kappa Sigs and Corps members; "Ag"

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and African studies; sabers and computers; the past and the future. Such contradictions seem under control at the moment, with convictions of various sorts enjoying respect, or at least tolerance.

But such is the modern obsession with safety and health that one can imagine a movement just to get rid of the old ways and old ideas. The feminization of A&M, like the feminization of the military, and of the church, and of a lot of other institutions, challenges every institution perceived as male, wholly or partly. (Do any wholly male institutions, come to think of it, remain, outside the Roman Catholic priesthood?)

The Aggie bonfire, conceived by males, built by males—though a woman student-worker died in the bonfire's collapse—exemplifies A&M's male past. I have the sense that the feminists, for sentimental or programmatic reasons, are coming after the bonfire, and that they may enjoy some success at smoothing down its rough places, making it perhaps, in time, just another event on the school calendar instead of a fiery link between A&M's past and its present. And then what? The Corps—even though it has a few women? The uniforms, the yells, the boots and spurs . . . the tradition?

It may or may not matter. There was a Texas before the old A&M; there will be a Texas if all the old fades away. But you hate to see it, and you hate to see it done for unbecoming reasons. Wordsworth had it about right, if you'll pardon the pre-P.C. lingo: "Men are we and must mourn when e'en the shade / Of that which once was great has passed away."

William Murchison is a nationally syndicated columnist for the Dallas Morning News.

Letter From Italy

by Alberto Carosa

The European Kerensky?

◆

"Prodi, the Italian Kerensky?" was the intriguing headline of a full-page ad by a Christian-inspired group, *Centro Culturale Lepanto* (CCL), in two major Italian dailies, *Il Giornale* and *Il Tempo*, on May 14, 1996. In that manifesto, CCL president Roberto de Mattei, professor of modern history at the University of Cassino and one of the most vibrant conservative leaders in Italy, argued that, just as Kerensky paved the way for Lenin, the newly elected Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi would perform the same function for the Italian Lenin, Massimo D'Alema.

Romano Prodi, an economist and former public-holding company executive, led the left-of-center Olive Tree Alliance to victory in the April 1996 elections. Unrepentant communist Massimo D'Alema (who later boasted, "I am not a post-communist, I have been a leader of the Italian Communist Party and I am proud of it") led the dominant stakeholder in the alliance, the PDS, now renamed simply the DS.

The Prodi victory was one of the perverse effects of an awkward electoral system which appears to have been conceived to make winners losers, and losers winners. In absolute terms, the opposition Freedom Front finished ahead of the Olive Tree, 16.48 million votes to 16.27 million. To control a majority in the lower house, Romano Prodi had to turn to the 35 MPs from the hard-line Marxist Communist Refoundation.

Prodi's Popular Party, the left rump of the defunct Christian Democrat party, won just 6.8 percent of the vote, but Prodi contributed crucially to the Olive Tree victory. His ever-smiling, reassuring, safe image as a moderate Catholic and regular churchgoer proved the ideal decoy for his communist allies. He perfectly embodied the "fellow traveler" and "useful innocent" (others would say "useful idiot") whose role is to provide communist-dominated coalitions with the necessary façade of moderation to attract support.

But at least Prodi had to pass an electoral test. His successor, D'Alema, resorted to a boardroom coup which pushed him to the premiership in October 1998 with the support—or connivance—of two other Catholics: then-state president Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and his former colleague Francesco Cossiga. While the former asked D'Alema to form a new government, the latter secured the indispensable support of his post-Christian Democrat Union for the Republic (UDR) party's 29 MPs, including a number of turncoats who were elected on center-right opposition Freedom Front slates but jumped on the UDR bandwagon, lured by possible ministerial posts. Thus Massimo D'Alema's shortcut to power confirmed the old axiom that, in Western countries, communists would never ascend to government leadership through a normal electoral process.

So Roberto De Mattei's prediction came true. But what De Mattei did not envision was that Prodi might also go down in history as the European Kerensky! On September 15, 1999, after a long and at times stormy debate, the European Union Parliament voted Prodi and the 14 men and five women on his team into office.

Some analysts believe that the appointment of Prodi as head of the European Commission is an exemplary application of a *promoveatur ut amoveatur* strategy: namely, the removal of a stumbling block by its promotion. In this case, the stumbling block was Prodi's newly established "Donkey" party, the Democrats, who are in vengeful competition with D'Alema's DS party. This could be partly true, but it is by no means the complete picture. After all, Prodi's success in the role of the Italian Kerensky is his only real merit in the eyes of the international left. In all other respects, his two-year stint as Italy's prime minister was a damp squib. His legacy is a mammoth public debt, rising unemployment, tax hikes, expanding impoverishment, wild immigration, and rampant crime. According to the national statistics agency Istat, Italy's economy grew 1.4 percent in 1998, the slowest of any European country. Italy has the highest unemployment rate in the European Union; among youth under 25, it has reached a record 32.1 percent. Under Massimo D'Alema, the situation has been no better; does history offer any precedent of a communist head of government successfully healing the economic woes of his country?

Prodi was part of the old DC *nomenklatura*, which was swept away by anti-corruption investigations. Within this *nomenklatura*, he held top political and economic positions, appointments which were rewards for party affiliation and subservience.

Prodi's unanimous election—or unelected appointment—by the 15 E.U. governments, 13 of which are in socialist hands, was puzzling. A notable contrast to this chorus of approval was a series of investigative reports last year in the *Daily Telegraph* on Prodi's judicial misfortunes. The first was significantly entitled "Criminal enquiries that cast a cloud over the past of Europe's Mr. Clean." In

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its editorial on May 4, the paper reported that Prodi had been the subject of two criminal investigations, both revolving around allegations of cronyism, abuse of office, and conflicts of interest, more or less the crimes that brought down the last E.U. Commission. "It is important to stress that Mr. Prodi has not been found guilty of breaking the law," the editorial said. "Yet, as we reveal today, the cases leave several unanswered questions that the Italian judiciary, mindful perhaps of Mr. Prodi's position, has been reluctant to probe. When Mr. Prodi was simply an Italian politician, this was none of our business; but now that he aspires to high European office, it is."

Prodi—Mr. Clean—responded to these attacks the following day by distributing copies of the Rome court judgment from 1996 that cleared him of the charges that he had acted unlawfully in the privatization of a business when he was head of the state holding company IRI (*Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale*). In an editorial on May 6, the *Daily Telegraph* insisted that Prodi's defense was not good enough "to lay the matter to rest." The paper then disclosed that Romano Prodi had been placed under investigation at least four times on different charges. (Not bad for somebody who promised "total honesty and transparency" in the running of the E.U. Commission!) He was acquitted every time, the *Telegraph* noted, and probably rightly so, but the paper recommended that the European Union set up its own commission of inquiry into his business past in order to reach an independent conclusion. After all, why should Europe be satisfied with verdicts handed down by Italian magistrates?

The *Telegraph* pointed out that "the criminal justice system has frequently been misused in Italy to settle political scores. But this does not appear to have been the case with Prodi." Massimo Pini, former head of privatization at IRI, was quoted in the conservative daily as saying: "He was never prosecuted with the same harshness as others."

The British paper is not alone in questioning the evenhandedness of the Italian judiciary with regard to the *Tangentopoli* anti-corruption crusade, which was spearheaded by a Milan-based team of magistrates referred to as the *Mani Pulite* ("Clean Hands") pool. U.S. foreign-policy expert Stanton Burnett wrote in his book, *The Italian Guillotine*, that the Clean Hands anti-corruption investigation was a political revolution which used the judiciary to get rid of moderate parties (the Christian Democrats first) in order to clear the way for a communist bloc to take over. (Incidentally, for having reported Burnett's opinion in an interview in Italy's major opposition paper *Il Giornale*, journalist Stefano Zurlo was sued by two judges who served in the *Mani Pulite*.) Burnett's book has been released in the United States, Great Britain, and Canada, but despite its subject, no Italian publisher will touch it.

If Burnett's thesis is mistaken, why have the communists and their left-wing Christian Democrat confreres opposed the establishment of a parliamentary commission of inquiry into the *Tangentopoli* investigations? *Il Giornale* speculates that such a commission would have unearthed the "omissions, violence and falsehoods of a great deal of probes which, for them to remain legitimate, had to be confined to the darkness of prosecutors' offices." More recently, *Il Giornale* reported the opinion of Russian dissident Vladimir Bukovsky, who believes that the Clean Hands investigation was a ploy masterminded by the Italian communists to divert public attention from disclosures of their funding by Moscow. "Clean Hands has helped the Italian communists . . . to ascend to power," he claimed.

If Bukovsky is correct, it would also explain why the present leader of the opposition in Italy's parliament, media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi, is enduring prosecutions (which smack of persecutions) on the grounds that, as head of his companies, "he was not in a position not to know" what his subordinates were doing—allegedly committing financial crimes to facilitate their business operations. But the same concept did not apply to Communist Party leaders and their allies, including Prodi, whose cases were dismissed for the opposite reason: Since they were unaware of what their subordinates were doing, they could not be held responsible. Prodi may well have been saved on purpose, in anticipation of his possible role as an Italian Kerensky in broad communist-dominated coalitions.

Lenin himself was the theorist of these coalitions, or "united fronts," as a basic element of the Marxist strategy for seizing power. Without an alliance with non-communists, he believed, communism cannot be built. Lenin did not disdain even the most fickle allies, however "temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional" they might be. And this "applies equally to the period before and after the proletariat has won political power."

Be that as it may, Prodi appears to have embraced his new role with the utmost zeal, despite an unexpected hurdle: Following the European elections of June 13, 1999, the Christian-inspired center-right EPP (European People's Party) is, for the first time, in a dominant position, with 233 seats out of 626, compared to 180 seats for the ESP (the socialist party). This situation is not reflected in the new commission, which serves as the E.U. executive. In the words of veteran leftist MEP Glyn Ford, "it will be a red executive. For the first time, the left will have a majority." The EPP has already decried as a "myth" Romano Prodi's claim that his 20-person team is politically balanced: It contains only six members of the EPP's political family. Moreover, the EPP's German deputies were particularly irked by a generous concession to Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder: Germany's two commissioners both come from his socialist-led government, despite the unwritten rule that one candidate should be named by the opposition. This shortchanging is all the more glaring in the wake of what Schroeder himself termed the "massive election defeat" of his governing coalition in the recent European election. The German conservative opposition CDU-CSU won almost 50 percent of the European vote and is the major party in the E.U. parliament with 53 MEPs, but it has no say in the E.U. commission!

The EPP's British, Spanish, and Greek deputies are increasingly suspicious of Prodi. His leftist bias has become all too evident, to the point that his Donkey-Democrats party has joined the Liberal-Democrat caucus rather than the EPP's. No less disquieting are his political associates: mayors like Rome's Francesco Rutelli and Venice's Massimo Cacciari, and former anti-corruption prosecutor Antonio Di Pietro. Rutelli, a former member of Italy's Radical Party, is a staunch supporter of free divorce, abortion, and drugs; Cacciari is an ultra-Marxist philosopher whose books promote a violence-fueled chaos as a means to "regenerate" society; and Di Pietro, whose sudden resignation from the judiciary was never fully clarified, is a former leader of the "Clean Hands" pool, who claims to be prepared to eradicate corruption under an E.U. mandate.

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What these people have in common with Prodi's much-vaunted commitment to Christian values remains a mystery. No less of a mystery is how he hopes to "revive the Christian soul of Europe"—the basic message of his latest book—by playing into the hands of those whose primary object has always been to destroy it once and for all.

Alberto Carosa is an Italian journalist.

Letter From Inner Israel

by Jacob Neusner

Since I'm Jewish, This Must Be Judaism

◆

When religion becomes a matter of personal opinion, culture—which by definition is public and corporate—no longer defines what is eternally at stake in man's relationship to God. Ethics and morality give way to impulse and whim, and sentimentality rules. Private religion appeals to the feeling of the moment, and, under such conditions, learning and tradition no longer govern. What is gained in the attunement of religion to the moment is vastly outweighed by what is lost—the traditions of Western civilization.

With stress on a personal and acutely present-tense encounter with Jesus Christ, Protestant Christianity, particularly the left-wing of the Reformation churches, pioneered the privatization of religion but cannot be accused of its trivialization. The conviction that the "I" forms the criterion of all things is a grotesque misunderstanding of the Protestant conscience of Luther at Wittenberg. In the case of evangelical Christianity, religious individualism insists that Jesus Christ intervenes in each person's life. In the case of Reform Judaism, born in the heart of evangelical Christianity in Germany and responsive to the language and theology of Luther, there is a stress on what the individual finds personally meaningful in religious observance. So both evangelical Christianity and Reform Judaism secure a place for the radically isolated individual, for the integrity of his conscience, and for individual rights in the encounter with God, all of which characterize the religious bias of Americans.

But in this country, with our cultural bias against history and tradition and our rejection of social authority in favor of individual autonomy, the acute trivialization of individualism has made a mockery of the courage of Luther and the bravery of the early reformers of Judaism who, in the 19th century, thought about Judaic matters in a way without precedent since Sinai, finding room for the "I" of the individual Israelite among the "we" of "all Israel," the corporate, holy people of God.

The practice of Judaism in contemporary America, which has carried to its logical extreme the conviction that everything begins with me, personally, this morning, here and now, has shown the grotesque possibilities of the privatization of religion. Indeed, it is the unique amalgam of the religious and the ethnic in the corporate life of Jewish Americans, who are Jewish and therefore regard themselves as primary data for the definition of Judaism, that embodies those possibilities. Stated simply, if "Judaism" is "the religion of the Jewish people," then whatever religion the Jewish people practice is "Judaism." And then . . . get out of the way, because here comes the do-it-yourself-Judaism that supersedes Reform, corrupts Conservative, and baffles Orthodox Judaism.

A concrete example of the ethnic definition—since I'm Jewish, what I do is Judaism *tout court*—comes from Clearwater, the Jerusalem of west-central Florida. A local synagogue, Temple B'nai Israel, has invented a new religious rite for itself. Thirty years ago, Rabbi Arthur Baseman started what he called "the chain of tradition." He gave silver ID bracelets to young people who were completing their religious education at the temple. They wore them. Then they linked them together and carried them to the altar; the bracelets were "blessed" and put into the ark, along with the scrolls of the Torah. There are now 571 bracelets linked together, reports Maureen Byrne in the *St. Petersburg Times*. Baseman explained, "It deepens my faith in the continuity of Judaism and the viability of the people. We speak of a chain of tradition in Judaism from generation to generation. We will pass on our tradition, one link at a time."

Rabbi Baseman invokes a key image of Judaism: "a chain of tradition," which is represented as the teaching of Moses to Joshua, Joshua to the prophets, the prophets to the sages, and onward through time to "the oral Torah," the teachings of the rabbis of the Mishnah and the Midrash and the Talmud—and thence to us. But the tradition that is passed on in a chain from Sinai consists of religious teachings; for example, Hillel's famous saying, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?" That is tradition: content.

I do not believe that, in the centuries since Sinai, anyone before Rabbi Baseman ever imagined that by "tradition" people could mean putting names on ID bracelets and making the bracelets into a chain.

Jacob Neusner is Distinguished Research Professor of Religious Studies at the University of South Florida and a professor of religion at Bard College.

LIBERAL ARTS

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"Unlike so much of Britain's image, which is reserved and full of history and dead monarchs, the [Millennium] Dome is 20 acres of brash modernity meant to celebrate British innovation. . . . The aim of the exhibitions, its promoters say, is to answer three questions: Who are we, where do we live, and what do we do? The Dome's defenders say its exhibitions reflect a multicultural, multiracial Britain that is not represented by its most famous institutions and tourist attractions.

"'Most every place you go tells you what the UK used to be. The Dome experience is about where the UK is now, and to celebrate where we're going,' said Adam Liversage, one of the two dozen twentysomething guides hired to explain to the press and the public what the Dome is. 'People know about Shakespeare and Queen Victoria. But that's not what Britain is today, and it's not where we're going in the future.'"

—*from the* Boston Globe *(December 28, 1999)*

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HUMOR

Infomercial: An Algorithm for the Web

by Marian Kester Coombs

News Item: "Al Gore helped lead the federal response to Y2K, but that doesn't mean his own Internet operations went bug-free. The computer glitch took a tiny bite out of Gore's campaign Web site. The damage came inside his "virtual town hall," where a message from a supporter was dated January 3, 19100. . . . Gore's campaign . . . said it wasn't exactly a major glitch, even for the man who once claimed to have invented the Internet" (Associated Press, January 3).

The following "position paper" was also found on Vice President Gore's campaign website on January 3, 19100.

Americans have enjoyed the service economy (*Thank*You*Very*Much *TM) for some years, and now that we are all being served and serviced, it has been decided to fast-forward to the information economy.

Naturally, the *T*Y*V*M*TM economy demanded a large degree of interface with other people—serving, being served, servicing, providing services—while the information economy will not. But in this age of AIDS, perhaps that is not for the worse. Truth to tell, the *T*Y*V*M*TM was becoming somewhat strained. People had already begun "cocooning." "White flight" had evolved into "flight," period. From the service economy to a relationship with one's server, we now deserve the Internet.

Information is the lifeblood of the modern system; they who traffic in it have a corner on the open-ended future of our dynamic, emerging, interdependent, multicultural, supranational, technosensitive world. ("One must be absolutely modern." Who said that? According to *Telnet://sais.quoi.fr/~lavache/zut\zutique/lePoseurEnchaine.htm*, a Minitel site, it was Rimbaud, an African poet after whom the baud rate was named because he turned out verse @ a faster clip than anyone else in the 18th century.) It won't matter what you do, or what you are, but what you *access*. All conceivable data—census, marketing, financial, metallurgical, meteorological, legal, biographical, horoscopic, psychometric, antiquarian, astronomical, genealogical, lit-critical, personal-medical, seismographic—will soon be online, and access to—and manipulation of—these data will mean the success or failure of one's *oeuf de vie*. Gentlemyn, start your search engines—@ the on-ramp to the Infobahn!

One equity bug is still being addressed: Will everyone have equal access to cyberspace? It has been decided that the optimal way to guarantee this imperative is to extend shareware to all, as needed, with future wages or entitlements held as the *quid pro bono*. For those of historical brunt, this will be ruminescent of the "company town" of Yore (a place in England), but this time the "company" will of course be *global*, a vast improvement, by definition, over the merely local. To chat about this decision, which will be implemented no later than 19 April 2000, visit *http://elite.com.gov/Global.one/y/tGIF.html*.

How many hits should each person on the planet get daily @ his or her own homepage? The frequency will surely vary @ first, but as the Web is regularized and modulated into the global data-consciousness it is designed to become, doubtless the hit frequencies will asymptomatically converge upon a homogenerous rate. ("Hegel's Absolute Idea thinking itself" is one item that's listed when you search "global+consciousness" in Excite!, by the way. More data on "Hegel" are downloadable from such sites as *http://wwIII.nazi.net.com/hatemail.html*—if your server accesses banned media—and *gopher://oldmole.usl.edu./dubito_erg/o_sim*. Hegel, pronounced "hee-JELL," was an Algerian Marxist who wrote about how philosophy was the "opium of the masses" and who believed that the world would end in his lifetime when the Big Bang reversed itself. To see if it did, click on "Big Bang" @ *ftp://ustare?.uk/~miff/star/STAR/S*T*A*R*/start.htm*.)

Another equity issue people keep raising is: Does "the Net" discriminate against the disadvantaged? The short answer: No, you do not have to be @ any particular IQ level to participate in the information economy. You do not need to "understand" a fact in order to use it, as many tenured university professors have shown. These same professors further prostrate that to educate an open mind is easier by far than to re-educate (term verified by WordSearch) a mind that has previously "considered." Data exist independent of intelligence. Clearly, if information is the question, ignorance must, *pepso facto*, be the answer. Obviously, what you don't know can't hurt you—*eau de contraire*, it can empower you. Unknown answers modify the learning curve in unforeseeable ways, leaving always "one more yawning imponderable / Out yonder for the yearning learner to imponder / Or impound." (French poetry quotes courtesy of the previously aforementioned *Telnet://sais.quoi.fr* site, where "fr" signifies "frog"). In fact, FAQs are, in and of themselves, facts. Simply being in the vicinity of facts, studies show, has a contagious effect, just as being near handguns leads to an epidemic of both foreign and domestic violence. (Hit the "Stop Hitting Your Sister" site @ *http://www.pis.aller/~cschumer.con.demn/con.fisc/con.trol.master-menu.html*.) Experts agree that pointing and clicking serve the same neurophysicological function as "conceptualization." "Meaning" is a subfunction of fact/byte density, not the other way around. Research conclusively suggests that data insufficiency leads to feelings of "meaninglessness" and other "spiritual" psychoastigmata. Theories have proven that the intellectually underprivileged person will actually enjoy a massive advantage over old-style conceptualizers in the coming confluoridation by having fewer objections to (a) utilizing the new factitious environment or (b) accessing the opinionmaking functions of the many BBS and newsgroup sites that have been created to serve the growing need for ideas, positions, identities, comebacks, and punchlines; or (c) readily processing the revolutionary new facts being posted hourly—even minutely—on the Net. (This entire paragraph file, exclusive of parenthetical expressions, was transferred from *rodent* database+crystal.mud.)

It is the Net, and we are the fish. Our medium: the thoughts of others. Come

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on in—the water's fine. Who said, "Reading is a pernicious Habit, which destroys all originality of Mind?" You can have the answer in seconds by doing a "find" @ *http://www.smartmouth.edu/~oboy/neogab.html*. It was Will Rogers, explaining to an interviewer why he never learned to read. Son of a vaudeville roofer (see hyperlink to "vodvil" on the Yahoo!Reference:Universe:Life:Terra:Animalia:Mammalia:Hominidae:HomoSapiens:Artforms:Song+Dance:Dead/Dying:American:Local:Regional:Urban:Theatredistr page), Will Rogers never met a horse he couldn't ride, and portrayed his skills into a luxcruciating career as an early television "horse opera" star, complete with singing coyotes and a yodeling sidekick named Wiley. Horse operas were so called because opera and "high-note" culture in general were considered asinine during the period. Antidotal evidence demonstrates that our nation was largely rural during this period, the 50's, with women precluded from the paid workforce and laboring on small "tenet" farms. (In most cases, the original tenets have been lost or accidentally thrown out.) Men sat around under shade trees playing such games as *Etonne Moi* (the Appalachian version of "I Thought I Told You to Wait in the Car") and gambling with ornate "goobers" (filbert shells etched with tobacco juice). Further sites for the inquiring mind: *gopher://wiretap.hill/~billywhite.trash.com*, *http://web666.DRAGON.net/sys.boom.bah/~humbug_index.html*, *http://www.wow.genius/car/car/C_A_R/!/*, and of course, the planet's premiere GIGO site, the "Welcome to the White House" homepage.

The Rogers television series was taken off the air in 1958 due to the end of the French and Indian War—see the University of Blackhole-Calcutta's hotlisted cybersite for an overview of that little squirmish, which lasted over a hundred years and ultimately culminated in the final end of French rule in India—but its characters came back to life again in a children's cartoon of the same name that debuted on CBS in the fall of 1972 and can still be seen in re-run on Nick's "Morning Sickness for Kids." Scripts of the original Rogers series are downloadable from *http://www.dust.BinHex.com/inc.blot.html*. Fans of Wiley will be saddened to learn that he was killed in Vietnam by mortar-and-pestle fire the same day he arrived there after being drafted in November 1963. The Vietnamese government has a way-cool site that tracks everyone who has ever been born, died, heard a shot fired in anger or set a boot in Vietnam, comprising really detailed, verified information about each individual. See *goolag://charlie.surf.net.nyet.comm:1984/~comrade-hilton/hanoi_welcome.html*. Wiley's real name—Allen Greensberg—was adopted by our current chairman of the Federal Reservation when he was a youthful antiwar activist to protest the great artistic loss of one of America's finest actors in the quagmire (Yiddish for "cow pie") of Vietnam.

CU there!

Marian Kester Coombs writes from Crofton, Maryland.

FOREIGN POLICY

No Peace for Iraq

by Justin Raimondo

From Operation Desert Storm, unleashed against Iraq by President George Bush, up to the present moment, the attack on Iraq has been relentless. As I write, a report of a U.S. sortie over Iraqi skies and a clash with Iraqi anti-aircraft guns is hitting the wires—yet another skirmish in the continuous low-level warfare that has plagued this unfortunate people for nearly a decade. The other day, our military bombed the Al-Zanaziq elementary school, in Mosul, in the northern region of the country. Three children—Heba Khalid Mahmoud, 3, Mena Omar Zuhair, 4, and Ahmed Mahmoud Jameel, 4—were among eight Iraqis injured. According to the Associated Press, "a U.S. military spokesman at Incirlik base in southern Turkey refused to discuss what was hit or where."

The wanton criminality of our rulers is such that they do not even bother to deny their crimes. With implacable indifference to human life, they have wreaked their vengeance on the Iraqi people—with special attention paid to the children. These little ones have borne the brunt of the draconian sanctions imposed on Iraq: the *San Jose Mercury News* recently reported that the embargo on basic food items and medical supplies kills *4,000 children every week*. If the Serbs were doing this to the Bosnians or the Kosovo Albanians, we would have Christiane Amanpour on the spot, weeping and wailing and lecturing us with all her might.

So far, according to the United Nations, over a million Iraqis, mostly children and the elderly, have perished as a result of the sanctions. If this administration were consistent with its own Clinton Doctrine, which declared a "right" to intervene anywhere in the world if people are being killed on account of their ethnicity, then it would be time for the United States to intervene, once again—against itself. For why else are 4,000 children dying every week? If they were not Iraqis, they would be alive.

The low-level military campaign has been quietly ratcheted up, and the administration is busy organizing those few and fractious Iraqi opposition groups that will cooperate with the hated Americans. This is happening as the storm clouds of yet another crisis loom on the horizon, and the U.N. Security Council once again takes up the debate over Iraqi sanctions. Our leaders are pressing the issue of renewed weapons inspections. A resolution written by Western diplomats and pushed by the United States and Britain stipulates that the Iraqis undergo yet another long series of trials and delays before sanctions are lifted—and, even then, only on the condition that Iraq allow in yet another team of "observers" in the endless hunt for "weapons of mass destruction."

After years of rooting around in Iraq, inspecting presidential palaces and poking noses into the offices of the ruling Baath Party, the much-touted inspectors ought to have found *something*. But they have come up with little more than rumor and innuendo.

Russia, China, and France all agree that the sanctions must be lifted; Boris Yeltsin had taken the stand-out position, demanding a total lifting of the sanctions prior to Iraq agreeing to arms inspections. But the United States has been putting tremendous pressure on the recalcitrant Security Council members to get with the program—or prepare for unilateral "Allied" action. The resolution now before the Council would create a new Iraqi arms control bureaucracy called the United Nations Monitoring Verification and Inspection Commission: UNMOVIC. Now here is an acronym that describes perfectly the response of Western governments to widespread condemnation of their genocidal policies. Un-

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moved by appeals to either mercy or justice—from the Vatican and the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops, and pundits and political leaders spanning the spectrum—our remorseless leaders have committed what will one day rank as among the most horrific war crimes in history.

The cruelty of our policymakers is underscored by the proposed U.N. resolution, which is designed to delay the lifting of sanctions as long as possible. The new bureaucracy will take its sweet time to get up and running, with a chairman appointed 30 days after passage of the resolution. The commission then has 60 more days to draw up a "work plan"—that is, set up the hoops the Iraqis are expected to jump through before we agree to stop starving their children to death. A draft version of the resolution gives the commission 180 days to make a decision after its report is issued, and there will be further delay in actually reopening trade routes and getting Iraqi oil to market. Meanwhile, how many more children will have died? At 4,000 dead babies a week, and with at least six months before the commission will even consider lifting the sanctions—well, you do the math.

Compared to this, what Slobodan Milosevic did in Kosovo was a pinprick. If what is happening in Iraq is not genocide, then the word had best be retired from the English language, since it no longer serves any useful purpose.

The United States, Britain, and their allies on the Security Council are demanding a vote on a resolution Iraq is certain to reject. This would open up Iraq to another wave of assaults—perhaps a concerted and overwhelming attempt to solve the "Iraqi Question" once and for all. The two major Republican candidates for president have already weighed in, with George W. Bush strongly hinting that military action would be in the offing if he were the Commander in Chief, while John McCain energetically outdoes him in the warmongering department by openly declaring that we ought to take Baghdad.

The Iraqis, for their part, have declared that they will not endure one more day of this criminal barbarity and have several times stopped the limited sales of their oil in protest, driving up the price of crude oil on the world market just enough to remind everyone of who profits from the absence of Iraqi oil on the market—the oil companies, naturally enough. The same oil companies that are slavering over the Caucasus and backing the Republican heir presumptive. What a coincidence.

A nameless diplomat cited in the *Washington Post* put it this way: "We are finishing the chess game and beginning the poker game. And everybody thinks everybody else is bluffing." While the Allies are almost certainly *not* bluffing, the Russians almost certainly *are*—just ask the Serbs, who were sold down the river for considerably more than 30 pieces of silver, as the Swiss bank accounts of the Russian gangster regime filled with Western "aid."

This time, it seems, the Russians are being paid in a different coin. The kind of maneuvering that is now going on was summarized rather succinctly by the headline of a *New York Times* article, "Russia Offers to Bargain on Chechnya, Using Iraq as Its Bait," by Judith Miller (November 19). While in Istanbul, at the big OSCE summit, Yeltsin did everything short of pulling a Khrushchev and pounding his shoe on the table. But away from the cameras, in vivid contrast to this very public tantrum, the real story was Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov making kissy-poo with Madeleine Albright. The sordid details of the romance were recorded in a Russian official document, submitted to Albright, which suggests that, in return for not bringing up Chechnya at the Security Council ("which is unacceptable to us"), Moscow promised to be "ready to instruct the Russian representative to the Security Council to be flexible on Iraq."

A free hand for the Russians in Chechnya in exchange for the Allied dismemberment of Iraq—it is not hard to see such a bargain being struck between Clinton and Yeltsin.

Without Russia's veto, the U.N. resolution would provide a "legal" pretext for renewed U.S.-British military intervention. By refusing to let in a new "inspection" team, and declaring that the materials requested by the commission have long since been destroyed, the Iraqis are saying: better to die in battle than to watch your children and elderly parents slowly waste away. May God be with them.

Justin Raimondo writes from San Francisco.

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FILM

James Bond, Luddite

by George McCartney

The World Is Not Enough

Produced by MGM-UA
Directed by Michael Apted
Screenplay by Neal Purvis and Robert Wade
Released by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

The World Is Not Enough (hereafter TWINE, as its promoters have dubbed the film) is the 19th official James Bond feature. As if that weren't distinction enough, it is also the first genuinely interesting one since the 1963 release of *From Russia With Love*, the series' second film and the last one not to be ruled by what has become the Bond formula. TWINE director Michael Apted and his writers have chosen to reimagine the series. They have exaggerated its stylized conventions and, in so doing, revealed what made it such a popular success. The secret can be found in one of its more conspicuous conventions: the lone individual taking on the forces of a dehumanizing technocracy. It turns out that, gadget master though he is, Bond is at heart a Luddite.

This Bond film, like the others, opens with a pre-credit special effects and stunt extravaganza. In TWINE, this is more crowd-pleasing than usual. Bond—Pierce Brosnan playing the part with more authority than his first two Double 0 ventures—takes out a roomful of evil Swiss bankers with a pair of eyeglasses and makes his getaway by jumping from a tenth-story window with an improvised bungee cord. As usual, the real plot begins after the opening escapade. Bond finds himself once again pitted against an archvillain of supremely technocratic intelligence, willing to destroy civilization with a nuclear device he has cunningly stolen from either the Americans or the Russians. And, also as usual, Bond's unerring instinct leads him directly to his enemy's lair. After a few singlehanded skirmishes with an army of faceless thugs, he calls in the forces of virtue (the British and Americans, of course) and pulls the

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plug on the nefarious operation.

The Bond films have nothing to offer in the way of suspense or character development; what they provide is a ritual in which every move is as predictable as in a Japanese Noh play.

Why has this particular ritual so captivated audiences for 37 years? Other films have employed the same ingredients, but never as effectively. The Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicle *True Lies* tried and failed miserably. Mike Myers' *Austin Powers* japes falter because they are little more than parodies of what is already a parody. (The Bond franchise has always been smart enough to give its material an arch, ironic style, as if to say to the audience, "This is ridiculous, isn't it? But let's enjoy ourselves.")

The truth is, all the Bond copies, whether straight or comic, have left out the essential ingredient: Bond's attitude toward technology, which invariably surfaces in our hero's obligatory interview with Q, chief of technical operations. In this *de rigueur* moment, Q (Desmond Llewellyn, who died in an automobile accident last December at 85) briefs Bond on his most recent creation in an ever-more startling line of lethal gadgetry—cigarettes that fire miniature missiles, elegant sports cars equipped with radar and machine guns, getaway helicopters fully armed with heat-seeking rockets that collapse to satchel-size. In TWINE, it's a remote-controlled BMW with enough firepower to take out a tank battalion. Having explained the functions of his deadly toys, Q reluctantly hands them over, a note of pained exasperation entering his voice as he pleads with the smirking 007 to take care of his prized inventions.

It's here that the plot ritual really begins. When will these wonderworkers reappear? What awful menace will they enable Bond to overcome? Whatever suspense the series can still muster derives from these questions. But the gadgetry itself doesn't matter much; it's how Bond treats it that makes the series compellingly distinctive. Whether Bond dispatches his enemies with his cigarette missiles or his car's firepower, we know that afterward he will dump his equipment casually, even contemptuously, as if it were of no account.

It is Bond's irreverent use-and-dispose attitude toward high-tech equipment that has made him such an attractively subversive hero for our time. For the general audience, bewildered by daily reports of dioxin spills, nuclear proliferation, and germ warfare, what could be more satisfying than an unflappable hero so singularly unimpressed by technology, however lethal?

Bond's disdain for technology cannot fail to warm the heart of anyone who has struggled with a stalled car in sub-zero weather or argued futilely with surly mechanics about how best to fix it. Our hero is so coolly capable that he can even repair the ultimate appliance malfunction: a primed thermonuclear device counting down to doomsday. He merely reaches into the ticking mechanism and instinctively pulls the correct wires to save the world once more.

TWINE hits all these notes but does so in an uncharacteristically self-conscious manner. Apted seems determined to expand upon the series' subtext right from the start.

Following the time-honored formula, the opening credits are accompanied by young ladies dancing in silhouetted nakedness against spectacularly colorful backgrounds. This time, however, they aren't entirely unclothed. Slathered in black oil, they shine iridescently as though their bodies were more metal than flesh. The images may only have been meant to set the stage for Bond's assignment to protect Elektra King (Sophie Marceau), a young woman who has inherited her parents' oil business. Yet I couldn't help thinking that the dancers look and move remarkably like the mechanical woman in Fritz Lang's 1926 classic *Metropolis*, whose sinuous dancing bewitches wealthy young capitalists with the promise of untiring, uncomplaining, and ever-compliant labor. Lang's film is a naive but powerfully visualized allegory of what happens when human beings allow themselves to be seduced by technological expedience: They begin to treat people as they do machines, thinking of men and women as useful tools rather than as ends in themselves.

This vision of technology as a corrupting, dehumanizing force has always been implicit, if undeveloped, in the Bond films. The villains are invariably cold-blooded rationalists who have no compunction about slaughtering their own minor operatives. Their closer henchmen are somewhat insulated from this fate because they are likely to be more machine than human and therefore more reliably tractable: Red Grant, the programmed sadist in *From Russia With Love*; Odd-Job, the top-hat killer in *Goldfinger*; Jaws, the metal-mouthed giant in *The Spy Who Loved Me*; Onatopp, the human nutcracker in *Goldeneye*. They all lack any flicker of compassion, operating solely at their master's discretion, content to be mechanical monsters.

In TWINE, Apted pushes this theme further and deepens its implications. His villain, the indiscriminate terrorist Renard (Robert Carlyle), is literally unfeeling. A bullet has lodged in his brain; his nerve endings can no longer register either pain or pleasure. Immune to suffering, Renard is capable of making superhuman efforts to further his destructive cause. In contrast, Bond tears his shoulder muscles and tendons in the opening sequence, leaving him with a painful injury that doesn't magically heal as movie wounds traditionally do. Throughout the film, Brosnan winces and groans whenever he puts more than usual strain on his right arm. The implication is unavoidable: Renard's battle with Bond is one between cold, machine-like intelligence and a feeling, struggling soul. Renard has allowed himself to be reduced to a human instrument; Bond, though he uses technology superbly, never surrenders to it. He remains his own man, however imperfect.

There is ample warrant for this in the original Bond novels. Ian Fleming once remarked that the besetting sin of our century is not any of the usual suspects—pride, greed, lust, envy—but rather *acedia*, the inability to feel strongly about anything. In perhaps his best novel, *You Only Live Twice*, Bond's archrival and would-be nemesis, Ernst Stavro Blofeld, confesses to this malady when he explains his need to inflict as much pain on his victims as possible. "There has developed in me a certain mental lameness, a disinterest in humanity and its future, an utter boredom with the affairs of mankind. So, not unlike the gourmet, with his jaded palate, I now seek only the highly spiced, the sharp impact on the tastebuds, mental as well as physical." Like Iago, Blofeld's only motive is disgust with all that lives because it reminds him of the failure of his human feeling. Unlike Bond, he places his faith in technology precisely because it doesn't require personal attachment. Renard's case is even worse. As he says several times, "there's no point to living without feelings." He is left with only one bitterly thin pleasure: using technology to inflict as much harm as possible on those who

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still do feel.

Apted has tried to bring Fleming's theme to the foreground in a way that it wasn't in the earlier films. His Bond is a man of genuine feeling and loyalty, struggling to defeat the dehumanized forces of an uncaring rationalism. Unfortunately, Apted only partially succeeds; no doubt commercial interests prevailed upon him. The film is too cluttered with special effects and stunts to allow for an adequate treatment of this theme, and there are many points at which the script has been obviously and awkwardly truncated. TWINE succeeds only in being promising at first and disappointing at last.

If you want to see what Apted was after, read some of Fleming's novels. They are better than one would expect, especially *From Russia With Love* and *You Only Live Twice*. Better yet, read Graham Greene's espionage satire, *Our Man in Havana*, and then catch its truly marvelous film adaptation on cable. (Unfortunately, this 1960 production—directed by Carol Reed and starring Alec Guinness, Noel Coward, and Ernie Kovacs—has never been made into a commercial video.) Both novel and film masterfully dramatize what TWINE merely suggests: How much our souls depend on resisting the temptation to become instruments in the pursuit of power and wealth.

George McCartney teaches English at St. John's University.

HISTORY

On the Shoulders of Giants?

by William R. Hawkins

The Arts and Entertainment (A&E) television network, best known for its *Biography* series, has produced a list of the 100 most important figures of the millennium and devoted four hours of airtime to explain its picks. The list consists mainly of consensus figures: Beethoven, Columbus, St. Thomas Aquinas, Genghis Khan; and some 30 names are associated with the advancement of science. The list is heavily Eurocentric, which is not in itself a bad thing. European civilization came to dominate the world during this era, and A&E's audience is privileged to live in the most prosperous and powerful offshoot of Europe.

Yet this insular focus can lead to a distorted view. Does Princess Diana really deserve to be considered the 73rd most important person to have lived during the last 1,000 years? Is she more important than other royals such as Elizabeth I (80), Peter the Great (83), or Isabella I (78) who actually ruled and accomplished great things for their domains? Even in this century, did she have more impact than Joseph Stalin (79) whose "evil empire" was finally brought down by Ronald Reagan (85)?

Other questionable names on the list include Charlie Chaplin (95), the Beatles (76), Elvis Presley (57), Enrico Caruso (96), and Louis Armstrong (98). All were great entertainers, but unlikely to stand the test of time like Bach (26) or Shakespeare (5).

Removing such lightweights would open slots for more important figures. While George Washington and Thomas Jefferson are on the list, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton are not, despite their role in writing and promoting the Constitution. Hamilton's economic policies, and his more realistic view of world affairs, laid the foundation for the strength and prosperity that has helped America maintain its freedom.

Henry the Navigator is not on the list. He funded improved shipbuilding and exploration down the coast of Africa, an effort which eventually opened the way to Asia. With the phrase "global economy" on everyone's lips, it's important to remember that a 15th-century Portuguese king laid the foundation for worldwide commerce, which nations and empires have struggled to control ever since. These bits of history armor us against claims that "globalization" is so new that we must abandon centuries of experience in the face of the "irresistible" demands of an unhinged merchant elite who care nothing for the rest of society.

Other missing names include Pope Urban II, who in 1095 proclaimed the First Crusade against the advancing Muslims, creating Christian outposts in the Holy Land that endured for nearly two centuries. But then Saladin, who united the Arabs against the Second and Third Crusades, is also missing. Tamerlane is another Muslim warlord who learned from the Mongols and sought to replicate their empire. His importance to Europe stems from his 1403 defeat of the Ottoman Turks, who had broken off their assault on Constantinople and the Balkans to confront him in Syria. Even before the days of "trains, planes, and automobiles" (not to mention missiles), the course of civilizations could be affected by distant events.

Military leaders are conspicuously absent from the A&E list. But who can dispute the long-term impact of James Wolfe at Quebec or Robert Clive at Plassey, who ensured the influence of British civilization on such vast lands as North America and India? Even William Pitt the Elder, whose strategy they carried out, is absent. Abraham Lincoln (23) is credited with both freeing the slaves and preserving the Union, but could not have done either without Ulysses S. Grant, who is not on the list. Neither are the deans of modern strategic thinking, Karl von Clausewitz and Alfred Thayer Mahan—though there's room for a ninny like Eleanor Roosevelt (93).

It is also odd that a list devoted to those who made 1,000 years of history does not include a single major historian. (I am discounting, not overlooking, #46 Machiavelli and #7 Marx.) My choice would be Edward Gibbon. His *Decline and Fall of the Rome Empire* is arguably the best known modern work of history. Its fame is the main reason most people even know there was a millennium before this one. The work itself covers more than the title implies, tracing over a thousand years of history including that of the successor states to Rome and Constantinople, the Persian and Chinese empires, and the rise of both Christianity and Islam.

John Locke (18) is hailed as a champion of individual rights and democratic government who disputed the divine right of kings, but A&E fails to mention that one of Locke's "natural rights" was that of private property. Locke believed man was endowed from birth with the property of his own body and that, when he combined his labor with natural resources, he was entitled to the fruits of his efforts.

Indeed, economic thinkers are largely ignored in a list otherwise heavily weighted towards materialism and modern times. Adam Smith (20) is the only name primarily associated with the "dismal science." The absence of John Maynard Keynes is surprising, though not disturbing. Leon Walras, who married differential calculus to economic theory

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and revolutionized the field (for good and ill) is more deserving of mention.

I did not expect the German-American Friedrich List to be on A&E's roll, yet his thought warrants our attention. By codifying the mercantilist experience that guided the West to the Industrial Revolution, his *National System of Political Economy* laid out the policies that not only made America the world's leading economy by the end of the 19th century, but have underpinned the efforts of every other major country that has successfully industrialized. From an economic standpoint, this process has been the outstanding accomplishment of the millennium.

A&E did credit Karl Marx (7) for inspiring the monstrous tyrannies of Lenin (35), Stalin, and Mao Tse-tung (43). However, A&E implied that these were perversions and that Marx should be remembered for inspiring labor unions and a social concern for the poor. This is nonsense.

The Communist Manifesto, written in 1848, a year that Central Europe was swept with bloody revolutions, opened with the fiery sentence, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." Marx himself set the stage for the murderous purges of "democratic" socialists, labor union leaders, and other reformers under communist regimes. His first book (*The Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847) was an attack on Pierre Joseph Proudhon, a middle-class socialist who advocated voluntary self-help organizations, easy credit so people could invest in their own enterprises, and representative government. Proudhon was also an anarchist. Such sentiments had little appeal to those seeking a war to the death against all class-enemies and an iron rule based on historically inevitable and "scientific" principles.

Marx was not even the first social critic in England. That honor goes to the great Conservative leader Benjamin Disraeli, whose *Sybil, or The Two Nations*, published in 1845, is acknowledged as the earliest and best "Condition of England" novel. It exposed the plight of the working poor and the failure of a political elite corrupted by commercial greed. Contempt for those who work hard to make ends meet is not a proper conservative tenet, but one based on the 19th-century liberal (now called libertarian) embrace of the super-rich as social ideal.

The upstart Disraeli split with Tory leaders over the issue of "free trade." Rejecting this core tenet of liberalism, he rebuilt the party and restored its principles. In *The Conservative Mind*, Russell Kirk credits Disraeli with "saving [the Tories] from amalgamation with a utilitarian Liberalism." Today, an errant Republican Party needs a similar savior. Kirk goes on to argue that "the kernel of Disraeli's social theories, is the idea of the nation. Repudiating the social atomism of the Benthamites, despising the class hostility of the rising Socialists; he reminded Englishmen that they are not simply an aggregation of economic units, not simply soldiers in a class struggle; they constitute a nation." As Disraeli himself put it, "I am neither a Whig nor Tory. My politics are described in one word, and that one word is England." As the millennium comes to a close, we would be wise to remember both Disraeli and Kirk and carry their ideas forward. If only mainstream conservatives in this country still regarded themselves as Americans first.

William R. Hawkins is a visiting fellow at the U.S. Business and Industry Council.

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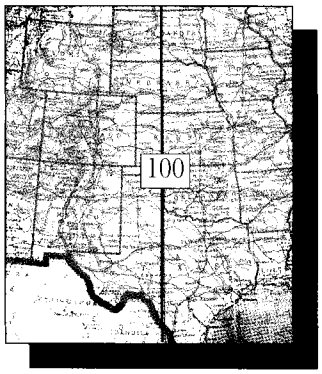
The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

A Sinner in Paradise



White sky, white earth. In the foreground a fenceline: three strands of barbed wire stretched taut between crooked posts cut from a juniper forest growing along the sandstone hogback, the bottom strand running in and out of low drifts of scalloped snow. The brushy tips of sagebrush vibrating on a stiff wind above the snowglaze, the brown bunchgrass, purple willows marking the drainage where a creek runs beneath a lid of semi-transparent ice, the black water breaking through in places where moss and tiny waterplants show green. A moose and her calf, blackened and misshapen, browsing half-concealed in the willow and greasewood; farther along the fence the frozen carcass of a doe antelope hanging by the heels of the top wire she failed to clear. A pair of bald eagles perched in a wind-polished snag, waiting for a semi to hit a crossing deer. In the middle distance the dark shapes of cattle pointed in the same direction with their muzzles down, grazing the knolls where the wind has swept the ground bare of snow; at the horizon a black timbered ridge patched and runneled with white, blurred by snow like sifting flour. There actually are people in the world who dislike this scene.

Four inches of ice to break on the watering trough this morning. It's constructed of galvanized iron, the ice forming along the inside curve and growing toward the center in an oval, ever-thickening ledge that resists loosening under blows from an iron pike with a snake-shaped head. The horses are eating snow, which they shouldn't do, but how do you keep a horse from eating snow when he's pastured on a couple of acres of it? They look like yaks with their grown-out coats but move differently, tossing their heads and kicking up their heels as we converge on the wooden crib where I throw down a third of a 110-pound bale of Elk Mountain hay, the best grass grown in Wyoming, rich in proteins and vitamins. You buy cheaper stuff, your horses can process hay all day and still post a calorie deficit over a 24-hour period. The wind out of the northwest cuts beneath my hatbrim like a machete and sends scarves of gray snow twisting across the highway into town.

My friend Rhonda, her six-year-old daughter Micaela, and Australian sheep dog are leaving this morning for Manhattan Beach, California, to spend Christmas with their family. Posted on my computer are the phone numbers for the Wyoming Department of Transportation and the Wyoming Highway Patrol. Both report dry roads and favorable weather along Interstate 80 from Rawlins west to Salt Lake City; between Laramie and Rawlins, a distance of 98 miles over the redoubtable Elk Mountain pass, expect snow, blowing snow, high winds, slick roads.

"Remember: Drive SLOWLY, breathe on the accelerator, use your left pinky on the steering wheel, brake with the middle toe of your right foot, and keep your headlights and flasher on."

"I'll be all RIGHT. If it gets too bad I'll pull off the road and stop."

"Rhonda, it's a hundred miles between towns. You're from California, you have no idea how bad it can get out here."

"Stop it, you're making me nervous. I drive 85 miles an hour in eight lanes of traffic all the time."

In my 52-and-a-half years I've never managed to tell a woman anything.

Seasonal stories in the press of college students reported lost in the Rocky Mountains. The weather was mild when they started their hike, so they had on jeans, a light shirt and jacket, Nikes, Adidases, or just plain tennis shoes. Where do kids grow up these days? When I came out West 20 years ago I wasn't so dumb, having read in Laura Ingalls Wilder's books her terrifying accounts of three-day blizzards closing within minutes, farmers losing their way between the barn and the house, wandering off into the whiteout prairie to freeze stiff as a dried codfish. (I spent years looking over my shoulder in the Wyoming mountains in elk season, expecting to be sandbagged by a South Dakota storm.)

Around Whiskey Mountain south of Dubois the Bighorn sheep are coming down, crossing from one drainage to the next across the mountain's tawny shoulder: three, five, nine, a dozen, twenty-some of them appearing over the ridge, spidery black shapes plunging downhill at a trot into the next creek bottom. For practice, I put the glasses on them to check for length of horn: Your friendly game warden will issue you a citation for taking a ram as little as one-eighth of one inch short of full curl, and you're shooting at two to three hundred yards. At Torrey Lake the deer are browsing the sagebrush beside the dirt road, one of them a fat four-point buck with an agreeable expression and a notable curiosity about us. "If I had my gun along, his d - - k would be in the dirt!" My friend Jack Mootz speaking from our oilpatch days, 20 years ago: I can still hear—and feel—the blast of his .264 magnum going off beside me on the front seat of the old GMC Jimmy we took hunting with us back then. Today I park at the turnaround at the head of the road, and Norma and I hike the Bomber Lake trail a couple of miles upstream, following the creek as it plunges over the piled-up pink granite. To our left, a thousand feet above, the shoulder of the mountain is being scoured by a 60-mile-an-hour wind sweeping the snow from the open park and the trail we traversed horseback as far as Gannett Peak, 23 or 25 miles back in on the Continental Divide, four or five summers ago. The funneling wind is what remains of a winter storm ravaging western Wyoming as far as the Wind River Range, which stops it in its tracks abruptly as a 12-gauge shotgun halts a grizzly bear: Here in the valley of the Wind River—known to the Indians as the Warm Valley—the day is spring-like, as if the year were playing itself backward like a tape recorder in reverse.

It's an illusion, of course; the year winding down to the dreaded "holidays," which are to holiness what Disneyland is

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to Bethlehem. Maxed-out credit cards and nonreligious "seasonal" ones, jazzed-up carols, interfaith prayers, angels that look like Barbie with wings, Alfred E. Newman dressed like Santa Claus, celebrities at the White House (at your expense and mine), Madeleine Albright in the Middle East, cheese balls and rosé wine, double-parked UPS and Federal Express trucks, the ghost of Dickens' past (Scrooge resurrected as Ronald Reagan), computers with bows on them, lines, lines, lines—of people, of cars . . . Next year I think I'll rediscover an old Christian dispensation by invading some church and declaring sanctuary there, huddled among dying poinsettias. Christmas cards from old girlfriends you don't want to hear from, silence from those you do . . . The old year winding down, and now Y2K upon us. What's in a number? "2000" is just another digital adjustment, like the odometer on your car turning over. If, on the other hand, it produces the meltdown of the global computer network, that would really be something to celebrate—so would the collapse of the stock market. (Afterward, we could all get back to the business of living again.)

As late as my middle 40's I used to be depressed by the onset of winter, experiencing it as a rehearsal for old age and death. That made as much sense as the columnist who declared July to be the cruelest month after it had to be inscribed on John F. Kennedy, Jr.'s tombstone. A few years later, winter, like death, seems to have lost its sting—some of it, anyway. Every season, like every year, is a life-cycle unto itself: spring, summer, fall, winter. January is as young as July, September old as December. Snow-skiing and water-skiing are equally appropriate to the young and those who feel young; short days as vital as long ones. In addition to which, the inevitability of death means only that there is work yet to be done, and work is something better than youth: It is life itself. It took years for me to refuse the pain of mortal loss I felt every fall at oiling saddlery, cleaning guns, organizing camp gear, and packing everything away until spring. Now, I feel instead a release: into the world of making and reading books, listening to music and learning new scores—undisturbed by other possibilities, the awareness that I should (or could) be *somewhere* doing something strenuous, adventurous . . . dangerous. It's enough instead just to work for six months, and work well. (And ski cross-country. And ride a horse bareback across the snowy plain, trusting to the fiery barrel and rough coat between your knees to keep you warm. Hunt cottontail rabbits on snowshoes with a .22, rifle or revolver. And flirt with pretty women *après ski* when the lifts are closing and the bar is filling up.)

Schubert put all of life into *Die Winterreise*, not just snow, ice, darkness, and despair; so, in his *December Songs* inspired by the Schubert *opus* and written for the incomparable *chanteuse* Andrea Marcovicci, does Maury Yeston. With nothing much to do outside on a subzero day but pull hay bales down from the hayrick and break the ice in the trough, I lie for hours on the sofa listening to Marcovicci's poise-perfect performance, appreciating her flawless vocal technique and superb interpretive craftsmanship, relishing the purity of her voice, by turns girlish and womanly, lighthearted and tragic. She's doing a stand tonight at the Oak Room in the Algonquin Hotel in New York City, which is where I am right now: seated at a table up front under the piano, in black tie to match her black velvet dress, drinking champagne and smoking a cigar (trooper that she is, she can sing above the smoke), Jim Tate and Tony Outhwaite with me in their penguin suits, and 36 longstem red roses (a dozen from each of us) beneath the table for presentation after the performance. And outside the elegant room where we sit enthralled, New York in December: a night sky stained red by city lights, the tracks of taxis in the snowy streets, a blonde in a fur coat and hat standing at the iron gates in front of 21 while her escort pays the cab fare. What is she singing now? "But of course, / It was only a dream . . . "

The road not taken. Better off out here in Wyoming after all, where the most priceless luxury the modern world has to offer—solitude—is common as sagebrush and bentonite. (At a price, of course: Even the priceless carries a tag attached to it.) South of Casper, the route between Dubois and Laramie crosses the Shirley Basin, skirting the Shirley Mountains on its way to the town of Medicine Bow (population 350) for a distance of 71 miles. In wintertime, these are not relaxing ones. East of Bear Mountain the ground blizzards begin, pushed by winds up to 70 miles an hour funneling northeast through a ventura opening to the high plateau. The road disappears in blowing snow, though the sky remains blue above; barely in time I discern a car off the road where it failed to make the grade ahead. A Subaru wagon, and beside it a tall figure dressed in blue and a blue woolen cap on its head, waving its arms like a military signalman.

"Are you a mechanic?" the figure shouts as I draw alongside. He has the hood up, so the engine compartment is filling rapidly with snow.

"Only when it comes to horses. You can't work on a car out here in this weather. Get in and I'll give you a ride as far as Laramie."

He's a student at the University of Wyoming, returning from a visit to his grandparents in Thermopolis.

"What happened to your car?" I ask, gearing down from fourth gear to third as the truck enters a curve. (On ice, you're safer when the engine does the braking instead of the peddle.)

"I have no idea. I couldn't get power on the hill and then the engine died and all the idiot lights went on. I had plenty of oil and gas, though."

The fuel line frozen, most likely—something I warned Rhonda against. A student of postindustrial technology, my passenger appears to have little if any familiarity with the industrial-age variety. That's all right, I'm neither service-station repairman nor rocket scientist myself. He's lucky I happened to come along, though.

So you're going back to cold country, they said, shaking their heads uncomprehendingly, when I departed Nuevo Mexico last summer with a song in my heart. Well, yes. And why not? Winter builds character and promotes the healthful consumption of alcohol and fine wines. Also solitude, character-building not being high on Americans' personal agenda these days. And peace. What, finally, is the secret to life, if not wanting for yourself only what no one else wants at all? The saints have always grasped that fact intuitively. Why should it be so tough for us sinners to figure out? c

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